DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE LIGHT OF PERSONALITY

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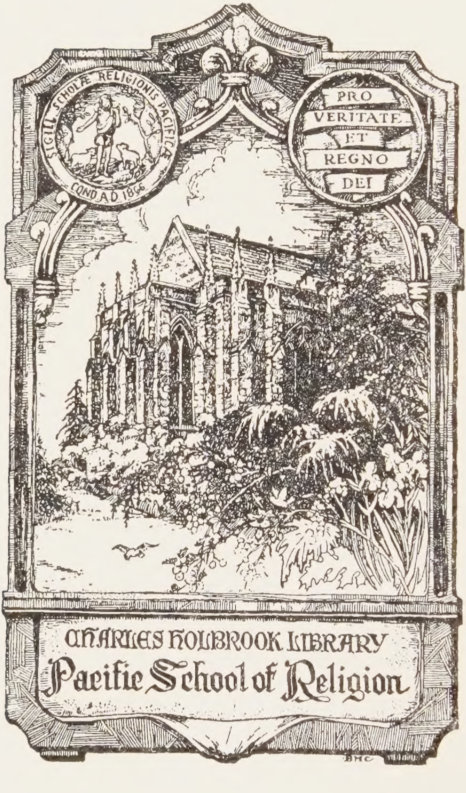

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DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE LIGHT OF PERSONALITY

By
THOMAS STEPHENSON
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PREFACE

THE subject of Providence has already been dealt with in the series of Fernley Lectures, in the admirable and comprehensive work by the Rev. John Telford entitled *Man's Partnership with Divine Providence*. As it happened, the present lecturer had very short notice, and was bound to take up a subject for which a fair amount of preparation had been previously made. It is hoped that there is room for a study of Providence from the special point of view of Personality. Sincere thanks are due to Dr. F. Platt for many helpful suggestions as to the plan of the book, and for kindly reading the final proofs. Dr. Platt and Dr. J. E. Turner have helped much in the study of the questions connected with Transcendence and Immanence, though they might not approve of the conclusions reached in the essay.

T. STEPHENSON.

OUNDLE, 1930.

FOREWORD

The simplest meaning of the word ‘ Providence ’ has reference to the ‘ preservation ’ of all living creatures by the divine activity, as in the words of the Psalmist : ‘ Thou preservest man and beast ’ ; but the meaning of the term must be extended to cover the whole sphere of God’s moral government, in His guidance of individual men, and the whole course of human history. Again, God’s guidance is not merely to be traced in the moral order, but in the realm of religious life also. Thus the field of Providence is the whole life of man, in all its relations—physical, moral, and religious. If we distinguish a lower activity, in Providence, from a higher activity, in Grace, we must remember that the same God is working in both ways, and for the same ends. He who said, ‘ Thy sins be forgiven thee,’ said, in the same breath, ‘Arise and walk.’ For Christian thought, God is fully personal ; and man, as personal, can enter into effective relations with God through every power of his nature, can adore, and obey, and understand, and love : and in all this he is responding to a divine activity and self-manifestation. Thus the life of Christian faith is one of conscious co-operation with a heavenly Father, which implies, on God’s side, personal guidance of each one of His children.

It is evident that the question of personality is central for any defence and elucidation of the Christian belief in Providence. In the present essay an attempt is made to bring the implications of personality, human and divine, to bear on the chief problems and aspects of the Providential Order.

The argument is not at all in one straight line, but is an attempt to focus upon one centre considerations drawn from various departments of human life and experience. This, which seems the only available method, involves some repetition ; but there is rather gain than loss on that account. The first three chapters have to do with the whole problem of personality ; and the argument, in the main, is from the implications of human personality to the divine. The questions of the Trinity and Incarnation are briefly considered ; because it is from the *full* Christian conception of God that we get the truest insight into the Providential Order. In particular, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation lights up the meaning of the Cosmic Order, and assures us of the unity and concurrence of God's work both in Providence and Grace. The divine guidance is seen at its highest in the realm of Grace ; and therefore the subjects of Predestination and Grace are noticed. God's purposes of Grace control *all* His activities ; and, if we can be sure that He is gracious, we are sure that everything works for good in every relation of life, in the physical as well as in the spiritual order.

The next two chapters have to do with the Cosmic Order. We, as persons, have the sphere of our experience in a physical universe, governed by physical law. The problem is set at once, as to whether God, as Creator, is really free to help and guide His children, individually, under the conditions obtaining in the physical order. The general position taken is that the universe is the field in which God's education of His children is proceeding. Whatever its full and complete meaning may be, this principle is central. The universe is spiritually conditioned and controlled by a personal God for personal ends.

Next, the modes of the divine providential action are considered, in the light of the results so far reached, and the questions of the Miraculous and of General and Special Providence are reviewed. Here, again, the ruling principles must be consistent with, and drawn from, the nature of God and men as personal. In this connexion we have to do with the very difficult and intricate questions which lie on the borderland of scientific and religious faith. If in this region the superior claims of personality are defended, it is with no conscious prejudice against full recognition of all that is true in the findings of scientific research.

Very closely interwoven with the questions relating to the divine activities in the guidance and education of men are those connected with the human response to Him who guides. Such response is through Prayer and Faith ; and these topics are dealt with in some detail. In prayer and faith there is always the direct appeal of the finite person to the Father who hears and empowers the believing soul. It is here that there is a certain amount of unavoidable repetition.

The most serious difficulties in any theory of Providence are those arising from the presence in the world of Pain and Moral Evil. These are much-worn themes, but they could not be neglected. Lastly, no theory of Providence would be complete, or even tenable in any adequate way, apart from the Christian Hope of Immortality. It is only in the light of the Life Eternal that God's ways with man here on earth can be understood, and the full meaning of personality developed. It is with some exposition of the Hope of Immortality that the discussion is concluded.

The chapter on ‘ Providence in the Bible ’ sums up the biblical evidence, in general correspondence with the method of treatment adopted in the essay. Some readers may prefer to take it first, rather than last, as it illustrates fairly fully the actual problems with which we have to do.

With reference to the specific instances discussed, no doubt there may be much difference of opinion. It is a somewhat hazardous venture to introduce them ; but it is hardly right to confine oneself to general principles which are not carried out into detail, however imperfectly.

The notes in the Appendix are partly to elucidate and partly to complete the exposition of the essay. The subject of the Absolute is one about which very various ideas are held. Its relevance to the subject of Providence is that it involves, in some of its forms, the conception of a 'Finite God.' The notes on Divine Transcendence and Immanence, and on Philosophy and Science, give fuller justification for the way in which Evolution and Miracle have been dealt with in the essay. The notes on Judgement and on the Ministry of Angels complete the chapter on 'Providence in the Bible,' which would have been too long if they had been incorporated in it.

I

GOD AS PERSONAL

ONLY if our Christian belief in God as personal can be justified have we any case for Providence at all ; and, as modern thought has attacked this conception on many grounds, we are necessarily put on the defensive. It may be said, not only that a good defence can be made, but that the war has been carried into the enemies' country. Theism has now a better case than ever, though its present exponent may only be able to sustain it in a halting way. Our task is not only to attempt the vindication in general, but to inquire whether the implications of divine personality carry with them warrant for belief in such special providential activities as we find ascribed to God in the Bible. If our inquiry leads straight into a somewhat intricate philosophical discussion, that cannot be helped. We must make sure of our foundations if we are to have an enduring structure of thought.

METHOD OF INQUIRY

If we are to learn anything at all about the nature of God, or Reality, we must use our own nature as a key. As we better understand what is the nature of that bit of reality included in our own experience, we can understand better all reality. To know God, we must first know ourselves, and as we know ourselves truly we shall know something truly about God. Theology is often accused of being 'anthropomorphic,' and of making God in man's image : in fact, any possibility of reaching truth in theology is cut away. But, if this contention is valid, we are not only debarred from the discovery of truth in theology, but in science just as completely. Illingworth says, ‘ Philosophy and science are, in the strict sense of the word, precisely as anthropomorphic as theology, since they are alike limited by the conditions of human personality, and controlled by the forms of thought which human personality provides.’ ‘ Personality is the gateway through which all knowledge must inevitably pass. Matter, force, energy, ideas, time, space, law, freedom, cause, and the like, are absolutely meaningless phrases except in the light of our personal experience.’[1] To this we might add that the more completely the whole of our nature, both as hoping and feeling, purposing and willing, as well as thinking, is brought to bear on any situation, the nearer shall we get to the truth of it. It is only for some purposes that thought works best in a certain isolation ; but then it can only attain a partial aspect of reality. Such considerations are more fully recognized now than they have ever been. For instance, Bowne says, ‘ Free intelligence is the only true explanation of anything. But intelligence itself is never to be explained ; it is rather the principle of all explanation.’[2] Of course, ‘ free intelligence ’ is personal activity in view of an end.

What is the Soul ?

For our purpose it is hardly necessary to discuss all the factors that must enter into the conception of personality. If we use the term ‘ soul ’ to indicate the spiritual reality which a man is, looked at from the highest point of view, one way of describing it is that it is ‘ the conscious experience itself as a whole, and as possessing a unity which is the very essence of its peculiar nature.

[1] Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 25.

[2] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 153.

The soul, in the only sense in which the word can be properly used, is the living experience in its fullness. It is the living experience of the individual. This experience possesses unity, continuity, and individuality. It is self-conscious and self-directing. This is the Soul, or Self of man. It is the personality.'[1] More succinctly, Pratt defines the moral self as 'a group of powers united in the service of a harmonious system of purposes.'[2]

In both these extracts there is no distinction made between the self as experiencing subject, and its objective experiences. It might be better to use the term 'soul' to indicate especially the finite spiritual subject of experience, and 'self' or 'person' to indicate the soul *plus* its passing experiences. You never 'catch' the soul, of course, apart from a particular experience; but that experience, a passing thought or feeling, or whatever it may be, is an experience of and for a subject. The subject is immanent in that experience, and also, as transcendent, unites that experience to its own past and future in one permanent individuality or personality which has a character and a dominating, forward-looking purpose; and that dominant purpose is the most important thing about it. In personal life, conscience, will, reason, freedom, hope, aesthetic discernment, and other factors all play their part. The self is a permanent creative whole, whose proper destiny is continual growth. What this growth may attain to, we have no means of knowing. The gates of the future are wide open. 'If spirit is supreme, its end must be sure of realization, and the procession of its great year know no decline.'[3] 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'

[1] D'Arcy, *God and Freedom in Human Experience*, p. 224.

[2] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*. p. 123.

[3] Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 361.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALITY

As an illustration of the widespread recognition of the central importance of personality as the ground of all our knowledge of reality, a short catena of quotations is appended.

‘ The Universe is so related to Personality, that Personality *has really appeared* as the child of all.’ (Merrington, *Problem of Personality*, p. 191.)

‘ Personality is the highest fact we know in all the realm of being.’ (Clarke, *Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 69.)

“ If anything has absolute value it is personality.’ (Davidson, *Recent Theistic Discussion*, p. 132.)

‘ Personality is our canon of reality, the most real thing we know, and by comparison with which we estimate the amount of reality in other things.’ (Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 43.)

‘ Personality, involving, as necessary qualities of its being, reason, will, love, is incomparably the highest phenomenon known to experience, and as such has to be related to whatever is above it and below it by any philosophy based on experience.’ (Moberly, Church Congress, 1891 ; quoted by Illingworth, op. cit., p. 236.)

‘ Personality not only proves to be the prime unit of reality, the criterion of existence, the synthetic principle, the condition of experience, the best mode of existence, the highest category of explanation, but it is also the supreme type of Unity, and the only solution of the Sceptic’s problem of the One and the Many.’ (Merrington, *Problem of Personality*, pp. 193–4.)

‘ Our personality is as truly supernatural as the Divine Person in whom alone it finds its home.’ (Illingworth, op. cit., p. 137.)

FROM HUMAN PERSONALITY TO THE DIVINE

We therefore start from the position that personality *is*, that it is the greatest fact we know, that its values are absolute, and that it must be our highest criterion of Reality. At the same time, we are aware that our human personality is finite, dependent, and unfinished, and we are driven to accept as its ground a Source that is infinite, underived, perfect, and also personal. Metaphysics, being itself a mode of personal activity, must be radically mistaken somewhere, if it ends by sweeping away personality from the realm of ultimate Reality.

'Any philosophy which does not conceive the Infinite as in some sense concretely personal is intellectually blind at one essential point.' (Streeter, *Reality*, p. 137.)

'Our limited consciousness implies the existence of a consciousness that is unlimited. The life of every finite personality bears undeniable testimony to the necessary existence of an infinite Personality.' (Momerie, *Belief in God*, pp. 78–9.)

'If from the existence of Life or Mind it is legitimate to draw any inference at all as to the nature of the Universe, it can only be the Theistic inference: all things proceed from God and exist in Him, but they are not all equally expressive of His nature.' (Streeter, op. cit., p. 141.)

'Personality is the highest order of system known to the human mind, and a system of reality which did not include personality as an essential factor would only be a partial system after all and could not represent the nature of the ultimately real.' (Valentine, *What Do We Mean by God?* pp. 104–5.)

'The Supreme Real must be a Supreme Self; and if "the last word about the Universe" is ever said, it will be the complete revelation of the nature of this Self.' (Turner, *Personality and Reality*, p. 168.)

MATTER GROUNDED ON SPIRIT

As finite creatures, we have for our sphere of development material bodies and a material universe, and we have to work out the problem of the meaning of the physical universe in its relation to ourselves and to the Father of our spirits. It may be said that, for philosophic thought to-day, the idea that matter can be self-originated and self-maintained is impossible. The material world is an elaborate system of forces, operating in some medium called the ether,[1] which appears to be the matrix of these forces, but certainly is not to be called an attenuated matter. In fact, we must even cease to speak of forces, and regard the universe as a system of inter-related events. When matter was considered to be made up of solid, impenetrable, indestructible atoms, the idea that it was the obvious reality, and mind a fleeting, intangible, will-o'-the-wisp, might be easier, though never truly rational; but modern physics has changed all that.

Philosophy does not question the actuality of what we call 'things.' 'A chair is a chair right enough; that is, what an upholsterer or any one in a drawing-room would tell you about it is quite a true description. But, when you come to ask further questions, there is much more to be said, and these questions the upholsterer has never raised, and, as such, can never raise.'[2] What is now fully recognized is the primacy of spirit and its higher status of reality. But you cannot rest in the thought of two disconnected systems, especially seeing that in the case of all living and conscious creatures the two are inextricably blended. We have finally to conclude that spirit is the originating source and the sustaining principle of everything material. 'Nature comes through mind, and could come no otherwise; but this is not to say that nature is not a great positive experience, in which minds are carried out of themselves and made the vehicle of a spirit which they do *not* individually create and confer, but from which they collectively receive instruction and inspiration.'[1] Matter is capable of being explained in terms of mind, but mind cannot be explained in terms of matter. 'Nature is a continued discourse on the part of the Universal Power, addressed to man in the significant language of natural causes.'[2] 'The very thought of the world's dependence involves, as its correlative, the thought of an independent being undetermined from without. There is no question of the inevitableness of this conclusion ; we cannot avoid it, we cannot unthink it.'[3] 'It seems plain that the belief in a free and intelligent ground of things is as well founded as any objective belief whatever, and that this belief is one which enters so intimately into our mental life that philosophy and science, and even rationality, stand or fall with it.'[4]

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[1] The ether may not be *used* in current physical work; but it is never far away, as a background. Cf. Jeans, *The Universe Around Us*, pp. 328–9.

[2] Bosanquet, *Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 5.

'Corresponding to the constructive activity of our own mind, which enables us to know the material world as a system of relations, there must be the constructive activity of another Mind, essentially akin to our own, which produces and maintains the system of relations that we know.'[5]

Thus the universe is the expression and product of an ever-present, intelligent spiritual Activity. Its laws reflect the steadiness of the indwelling Mind, its intricate adaptations and progressive changes embody the purposes of that Mind. Human beings have a privileged position in the universe. They are able to discover its laws, and to initiate new series of adaptations on their own account. It follows that, though finite and dependent, their spiritual nature is very nearly akin to that of the Power that controls the whole.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 61.
[2] Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 142.
[3] Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, pp. 90–1.
[4] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 149.
[5] Momerie, *Belief in God*, p. 78.

How can they think of that Power except as a Person whose nature is as unitary and individual as their own? How can they think of their relation to that Power except as response to a revelation, as co-operation with an Agent? Philosophy is quite inadequate when it stops short of this. To talk of the universe, including man, as evolved out of the unconscious, implies that reason is divided against itself. We are offered impossible substitutes for the living God—impersonal reason, a blind *élan vital*, a teleological principle that is not a living agent, a principle of 'holism,' a system that constitutes itself. All these explanations leave out the principal thing that has to be explained.

CAN THERE BE AN INFINITE PERSON?

The idea of a personal God has been rejected on the ground that the very essence of personality implies limitation. A self depends for its experience on what is not-self. Now we may say that *something* unbegun and independent must be accepted; and as a mere conception that of an eternal Creator-Spirit is surely more luminous than that of eternal matter or eternal energy. No theory of the universe can be free from difficulties; how could we expect it? But the difficulties of atheism are far greater than those of theism. 'The conception of blind power working for apparent ends, of non-intelligence producing intelligence, of unconsciousness producing consciousness, of necessity producing ideas of freedom and duty—this conception is not a transparent one. But all this the atheist steadfastly believes, and professes to be supremely logical and rational withal.'[1]

We need to scrutinize the meaning of the phrase 'not-self,' and inquire what sort of limitation it implies. What is really meant is that a self must have an experience, a field for its activities. The thinking subject must have its objective thoughts. As we have noted above, the thinker is active in the thoughts, but is not the thoughts. So the self that feels and wills is more than feelings, more than volitions, is not the sum of them, or the system of them, but the cause of them, in the only full sense of the word cause. Every self must have a field of experience, of feeling, knowledge, and action, but the self is itself a primary spiritual individual, transcending its own experiences, one amidst all temporal and spatial changes. Our human self is in principle quite capable of functioning in an altogether different sort of environment than that which we here and now experience. The experience of the self is not something alien to the self. Even for finite selves the objects of experience are ultimately spiritual. Once we give up materialism, we realize that what is *given* in our experience comes to us from other finite spiritual selves, and from God, the Father of spirits. In fact, the universe is just language, and what it expresses is thought. For us, as finite selves, experience results from our reaction to what is given from without, and that ‘ without ’ is really part of God’s own field of experience, and ultimately spiritual. If we have eyes to see, we meet God everywhere. Moreover, our personality is a growing thing ; and, starting from our sense-experiences, we build up for ourselves an ideal world, quite other than the material, in which, as poets and artists, we create a higher reality. Of this higher reality, goodness is the supreme expression. Human life is a great achievement, from the moral point of view, however sadly marred by evil. Here, even in the finite sphere, eternal values are being created. The fine words of Stevenson may well be repeated : ‘ Ah, if I could show you these men and women all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls.'[1]

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[1] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 319.

The struggle for goodness is a far more significant thing than the struggle for existence, and, as a matter of plain historical fact, it has met with an amazing degree of success. As mere conceptions, we will say, the Sermon on the Mount, and St. Paul's exposition of love, are supreme creations of the human spirit ; but they have within them elements of absolute and eternal value. Here the human experience and the divine are in nature identical. Man is uttering God's thoughts ; he is reaching out towards the divine character.

We are certainly warranted in saying that on the moral side finite personality is capable of perfection ; and our Lord indicates the same when He says, 'Ye shall be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' All this is God's gift to man ; and shall we say that the Author of all goodness cannot Himself be good ? If philosophy tells us that God cannot be personal, it also tells us that He cannot have a character, and cannot be good ; and this seems the most hopeless triviality. If a way of escape is sought by saying that God is *above* morality and *above* goodness, those words are evacuated of all meaning. We may well say, as it is written in Job, 'Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge ? '

For us, the not-self which is the field of our sentient experience is the order of nature, a great system which science may treat as impersonal, which, nevertheless, must have purpose as its ground, and so a personal Creator. For us, the not-self which is the field of our moral and religious experience is the order of grace, which is a manifestation of love. Thus our approach to Reality, whether by the way of nature or the way of grace, is in touch all the time with *personal* activities.

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[1] Stevenson, *Across the Plains*. Quoted in James's *Talks to Teachers*, pp. 282–3.

To us God *must* be personal : what is He for Himself? Do wisdom and purpose and love, when traced to their source, simply vanish? To say that they are 'transmuted in the Absolute' is to say the same thing more grandiloquently. But if, in the order of nature and the realm of finite souls, the divine wisdom and love are active, creating here a finite field of the divine experience, what is there impossible or self-contradictory in believing that beyond this there is a divine experience which we can never share, yet is in principle identical with that which we can share? The difference may simply be, that in the case of a finite self the field of experience is largely other-than-self, but in the case of the Supreme Self the field of experience is self-constituted and self-maintained. The otherness disappears when we try to realize what God is for Himself; but it has to be reckoned with when we approach the problem of creation.

'The perfect person is one whose only limit is Himself, and, therefore, self-determined, self-dependent, self-identical, including the finite, not as a necessary mode, but as a free manifestation of Himself, and thus while constituting its reality, unaffected by its change.'[1]

'To the question, What is the object of the Infinite's consciousness? the answer is, The Infinite Himself, His thoughts, states, &c. To the question, On what does this consciousness depend? the answer is, On the Infinite's own power to know.'[2]

It is true that in creating finite persons God has in some sense limited Himself; but this is a freely chosen self-limitation, inevitable if there is to be any creation at all. It would be very presumptuous to say that the Supreme Being was eternally debarred by His own nature from ever creating anything. But is it really proper to talk of God as

[1] Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 92.

[2] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 167.

limiting Himself if He shall choose to create and bring many sons unto glory? Is He not thereby adding to the richness of His being? Doubtless we are often told that the Absolute cannot add anything to Itself; but this is the view of the Supreme Being as a merely static substance. How can spiritual life not be intensely active, and therefore ever changing and moving? If the Absolute Life contains all its possible elements eternally present and balanced in a static equilibrium, we should have something not far removed from the most primitive form of matter. Out of such conditions creation could not eventuate; and that at least has happened. If you say it is an *active* equilibrium, are you much better off?

In personal life, however, we have both change and identity. What is unchanging is its character and purpose, what changes is the ever-new and varied activities by which the character is expressed and the purpose realized. Why, *I* am, I hope, always adding something to myself; and if the source of such genuine additions must always be the eternal, divine love, none the less are they something *new*, something that was never in being before, even for God. How can God be continually pouring out new things, as Creator, whilst in some inner recess of His nature He is absolutely static? What God's life may be beyond time we cannot possibly conjecture, but, within time, change for Him need involve no real limitation or defect. We do not yet know all that grace and love can do.

It is extremely difficult to think out the meaning of time in relation to eternity, and of God's relation to time. Time could have no meaning except for eternity; and even in our finite consciousness time could not be apprehended unless we as persons transcended time. Brabant says, ‘ Reality or Being has two modes of existing. One mode is that in which it endures, which we call Eternity. The other is that in which it grows, and that we call Time.'[1] Beyond time God eternally is, and is eternally active as Love, within His own personal being ; and His eternal love and reason are truly expressed *also* in the time-process. Time is real because, under its conditions, God is ever manifesting more and more of His eternal reality, in forms that are ever new. In this sphere He is self-limited ; but it is the eternal Being that is so limited. 'God's self-limitation in Time is creative, due to His Will, while His eternal self-differentiation is due to His Nature, and endures, whole and perfect, before Creation, as it endures after history has passed away, and He is left "all in all."'[2] It is in the Trinity that we can see God as ever active and blessed, above time. '*We* do not help God to realize the perfection of His Being, which He could not do without us ; rather He shares with us the perfection of His divine Nature. We are free ; and God is perfect. We must hold to both facts, even though we find no formula to cover them both.'[3]

We have made much of human personality, and are trying to build on it our case for the divine ; but we are told sometimes that human life is a mere bagatelle in the universe, an evanescent appearance of no particular account, in space and time an almost infinitesimal factor. We hardly need to labour the point that the value of things that are spiritual is infinitely greater than of things material. The immensity of space is not more impressive than the scope of the human mind that can measure it, and analyse its contents from end to end. Things material can only exist at all as spiritually caused for spiritual ends. What *is* awe-inspiring is not the vast extent of the physical universe, but the wonder of the creative Mind. We certainly need to keep it in view that there may be other purposes of the Creator operating in His universe, of which we know nothing as yet, though we may be sure that they are in complete harmony with His purposes for humanity. Moreover, it is possible 'that all time has been peopled, and that all space is inhabited by spiritual intelligences. We live in the midst of a world that we can see, but we live also in the midst of a world that we do not see. With that invisible world, the spiritual as well as the sentient, we may have numerous points of connexion—we with them, and they with us, as parts of one great and connected system, embracing that portion of eternity and infinity which we call time and space.'[1]

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[1] *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation,* p. 347.

[2] Op. cit., p. 356. [3] Op. cit., p. 357.

The fact is, from the point of view of Providence, we may turn this consideration of the immensity of the physical universe right round, and see in it endless possibilities of future human education and growth. No doubt we are in the realm of speculation. As to whether there are many other worlds in space with conditions at all like those of earth, scientific opinion is divided, and is continually changing. But what if there are innumerable worlds with conditions *unlike* those of ours, to which we may become adapted? I would agree with the following words of Lily Dougall: 'When we think of the vastness of this magnificent universe of ours, of its innumerable solar systems, no idea could be more unnatural to us, if we did not inherit it from the past, than that this remote speck of star-dust called our earth should be the only part of it utilized by God for the progress of the human soul. It certainly seems to us a gratuitous limiting of possibility to assume as axiomatic that only in this little corner of the universe, and under the exact conditions of life here, can our destiny be worked out.'[2]

It must be said that we can only know God to the extent of the powers He has given us, and therefore in accordance with what He has Himself revealed to us. To know Him as He is, we should have to *be* God. And, similarly, we can only understand the world as created. To know how God creates we should, again, have to *be* the Creator. We, therefore, must leave some questions alone as insoluble, but hold fast to the certainty that what we *can* know of God is true ; and the highest truth about Him is His personality. In view of the great unknown in God, He is often referred to as 'Super-personal.' The danger here is so to exaggerate the unknown as to discredit the known, and make God really a mere impersonal Unknowable. As Streeter says, we want rather to raise our conception of what is personal. 'To say that God is "personal, but something more," is to say that the Creative Principle must be higher than the highest, richer than the richest, more full of life than the alivest of all things It has produced—and that surely is merely common sense.'[1]

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[1] McCosh, *The Method of the Divine Government*, p. 153.

[2] *Immortality*, p. 298.

The difficulties that beset our thoughts on this subject have led thinkers either to confine God's experience to the world of finite things or practically to sever it from all real contact with them. The former alternative leads to pantheism, or to the theory of God as a 'college of souls,' or as emergent as the culmination of an evolutionary process in time. The latter leads us to an Absolute in which all finite things and beings are 'transmuted'—into what, no one has ever told us. The theistic remedy for the first defect is the doctrine of creation, and for the second, in the main, the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of creation gives us a God whose being transcends the world He has made, and the doctrine of the Trinity gives us a God whose rich personal life, in and for Himself, is the guarantee of the eternal blessedness of His finite children.[2]

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[1] Streeter, *Reality*, p. 140.

[2] See also Appendix 1, 'God and the Absolute,' p. 347.

II

THE TRINITY AND INCARNATION

In treating of Providence, it might be considered sufficient to defend generally our belief in God as personal, and leave the matter there ; but Christian views of Providence cannot be adequately justified except in the light of the Christian acceptance of God as triune. God's guidance of man as a physical and sentient being cannot be properly understood apart from His guidance of him as spiritual and personal, the object of redeeming grace and love. By the Incarnation a new interpretation is given of the meaning of the whole Cosmic Order, and new light is thrown on the nature and destiny of man. It is in Christ alone that any finally satisfying solution can be found of the problems of Providence. The sphere of Providence cannot be rigidly separated from that of Grace. We never have to do with God merely as Creator, but with God as Father, the God and Father of a redeeming Christ, inspiring and guiding His children by the personal activities of His Spirit. In the love of the Triune God we are to seek all clues to the interpretation of Providence as well as of Grace.

God as Triune

It would be a great mistake to suppose that our faith as Christians depends upon abstruse speculations about the nature of God. Such arguments belong to the attempt, which has to be made, to think into a coherent whole the meaning of the great realities of the religious experience and the great facts and events of Christian history. The facts and events come first, and make the experiences possible. The difficulties of the theories result from the undoubted mysteries that lie behind the facts themselves ; but this is nothing to be wondered at, for mystery surrounds us on every side.

There was a Christian faith in a Triune God before there was any attempt to work out its implications. This faith arose, naturally and inevitably, from the facts connected with the historic manifestation of Jesus Christ, and the results that followed His death. The disciples of Jesus were Jews who believed in one living God, Creator of all things, and Lord of all mankind. But through His resurrection and ascension, and the experiences of Pentecost, and those that followed, they realized that Jesus had been sent from on high, and had returned to the glory of God the Father who had sent Him. They worshipped God through Christ, and Christ as the revelation of God. Moreover, the presence and power and grace of the divine Christ were realized in the midst of the Church through a quite new order of personal activity, in which they recognized the presence of another Paraclete, whose coming and gifts Christ had promised and foretold. Thus they worshipped and adored the Holy Spirit, through whom the Father and the Son were made known to them.

Again, it might seem sufficient to accept the main facts of the Christian experience of God, and to go no further. We should then have the simple ' economic ' or ' modal ' view of God's personality, namely that the Incarnation is the form which God's complete self-revelation has taken, and that the present operation of His Spirit is merely the sequel of the Incarnation. If this is all, God is *for us* Father, Son, and Spirit, but for Himself He is not triune. This position, however, could never be satisfactory. If as a fact there are three distinct modes of the divine activity in human experience, we are justified in taking the question very seriously as to whether these modes do not imply something to correspond in the eternal being of God.

That God is one, and that He is personal, the New Testament maintains as consistently and vividly as the Old Testament ; and the main line of Christian theology never swerves from this. But where speculation comes in, the general tendency of philosophy and Judaic theology, as well as early Christian theology, has been towards 'binitarianism.' If God in Himself co-exists with an eternal Son of His love, the fact of His personality would seem to be secured. We can see a similar tendency at work in modern denials of the personality of the Holy Spirit. What completely overpowered this drift of thought in orthodox Christian theology was simply that the actual history of the Incarnation, followed by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, made the trinitarian theory a necessity. There is a threefold manifestation of the Divine in Christian experience, and this must be adequately interpreted. It was Augustine who first attempted, with a very fine insight, to interpret the meaning of the Trinity in the terms of personality, and especially by the implications of love. If God is eternally love, He must have, within the Godhead, an object of love, and between the two Persons thus in fellowship there must be a bond of union, co-equal and co-eternal with themselves. He suggested several similar analogies in the manifold of personal activity, which, though they are not proofs, are a great help to thought. 'God is a manifold in an eternal perfection of complete personality, which is the perfect unity of the activity of the perfect mind ; and that unity is threefold, and only threefold, because it is not only the capacity for being at once the subject and object which is necessarily included in the word personality, but also that going forth in love and power which is the element that philosophy does not and indeed cannot know, but which to religion is all in all, the very Spirit of God, without which the other two are nothing but the categories of an impersonal Absolute. It is the Spirit that constitutes God personal ; it is the Spirit that makes God love, and Christ grace, and ourselves one fellowship with God.'[1]

Kirk works out an interpretation of the doctrine by the analysis of the Christian experience of God into three distinct types : first, that of God as sovereign Lord, the everlasting Father ; secondly, that of God as one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord ; and thirdly, that of God bringing into our lives the mighty illumination of the Holy Spirit, and this Third as ' wholly one with and yet wholly other than them both ; as personal, and yet as co-essential as they.'[2] Here the point insisted on is that the ' possession ' of the soul by the Holy Spirit is an experience of a different order from the ' communion ' we have through Him with the Son. Kirk says, ' Man recognizes in the " Son " and in the " Spirit " the respective termini of relations between himself and God so real that they must be dignified with the title of hypostases ; with reason he concludes that the same must be true of the Divine Nature itself. Nothing less real than a third hypostasis can be the bond of union between the Father and the Son ; and because the only other hypostasis of which experience has given him any verifiable knowledge is the Spirit, it is to the Spirit that this function of mediation between the other two is assigned.'[3]

What is extremely interesting in the two essays from which quotations have been given is that the personality of the Holy Spirit is regarded, not only as equally real with that of the Father and the Son, but as quite essential to the full recognition of it—in fact, as the key to the whole problem : and with this I agree. Perhaps the contrast of 'possession' and 'communion' is pressed a little too far. We should not think of the 'possession' of our personal life by the Holy Spirit as over-riding our own will, but rather, when we do fully and unreservedly accept His grace, as bringing such power and illumination into our life that it is lifted into a higher realm of being, into what Paul is so fond of calling 'the heavenly sphere.' W. N. Clarke, in the same Augustinian manner, works out a statement from the implications of a perfect self-consciousness. Here there is involved the originating centre of conscious life, and its objective expression, together with the recognition of that expression as wholly His own. 'God going-forth is related to God original as word to mind, or as son to father ; he is uttered or begotten, or sent forth from the primal Being. The third element is the unifying Spirit, the common life of Father and Son, completing His own being in eternal unity.'[1] And, again, adopting another analogy, 'The first in God, though it includes all fullness, is most profoundly the affectional. The second in God is named the Logos, which is the eternal thought or reason coming forth in utterance. . . . The third in God brings to practical effect the love and wisdom that are dominant in the first and second, completing the unity and fulfilling the purposes of the Godhead. Thus the third corresponds to that executive and effective power which we call the will. God the eternal heart of love, Christ the rational expression of the eternal heart, and the Spirit the accomplisher of the work of both, make up the Godhead.'[2]

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[1] *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* (Green), pp. 297 f.

[2] Op. cit. (Kirk), p. 235. [3] Op. cit., p. 236.

In this region we can only advance by means of insight and exploration, and every fresh angle of vision gives us a better view of the whole, and, therefore, no

[1] Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 175. [2] Op. cit., pp. 176–7.

apology is needed for referring in some detail to Valentine's interpretation of the divine triunity in his book *What Do We Mean by God?* In this presentation the keyword is 'response.' The ultimate Reality is one; but it is not one merely as a formal principle. The Supreme Reality 'must be thought of as a personal unity of harmonious response. The unity of the Godhead is a qualitative unity. It is the singleness which belongs to perfectly balanced character.'[1] 'The Holy Trinity is the kind of unity possessed by God as a personal whole. The idea of the Trinity is in no sense numerical, but entirely qualitative.'[2] If God is love, the activity and response of love to love must be first realized within His own nature.

'Eternally within His own being God is perfectly responsive to Himself'[3]; and this relation of response is described as a relationship of father to son. Again, we have to recognize *three* elements in this personal activity—namely, the subject of the response, the object of the response, and the response itself. Each element is personal and equally personal. 'As the subject of response, God is the eternal Father; as the object, He is the eternal Son; as the response, He is the eternal Spirit.'[4] God in loving is not loving *part* of Himself, in responding He is not responding to part of Himself, or to another self, and the content of the response is nothing less than the whole divine experience. If God is to have an experience for Himself we are bound to describe it in some such terms. Doubtless we can form no picture in our imagination of the inner relations of a divine experience. What we always tend to do is to isolate in our minds the inseparable and interpenetrating elements of the divine nature, and then we think of three separate persons, or perhaps of two, and so depersonalize the Holy Spirit. In our own nature we have some experience of trinity, as all the examples above referred to show ; for our activities belong to the three fields of thought, feeling, and will. In our experiences one of these factors is usually much more prominent than the other two ; yet in some measure all three are necessarily involved in every case, and interpenetrate. Always it is the whole self that functions : it is *I* who think, *I* who feel, and *I* who will.

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[1] Valentine, *What Do We Mean by God?* p. 187. [2] Op. cit., p. 188.
[3] Op. cit., p. 189. [4] Op. cit., p. 190.

Mackintosh sums up thus, ' God as Holy Love we name the Father ; this same eternal God, as making the sacrifice of love and appearing in one finite spirit for our redemption, we name the Son ; God filling as new life the hearts to which His Son has become a revelation, we name the Spirit. In this confession we resume the best it has been given us to know of the eternal God our Saviour.'[1]

In a very tentative way I would put the matter thus : There are three divine Subjects, and each has His own appropriate experience ; but that experience is fully shared by each of the three. The will of each is concurrent with that of the other two, the knowledge of each is fully shared by the others, and the love of each is fully reciprocated. There is one dominant purpose and one eternal perfection of character and complete oneness of action. The distinction is seen in the freedom of each as Love, the unity in its perfect reciprocity, whilst in the threeness there is room for endless variety and richness of experience. So God is tri-personal and triune.

Another illustrative suggestion may be given for what it is worth. For two finite persons to have intercourse with one another, some sort of physical world is required as a medium of intercourse. We know that for us this medium is created and controlled by God, and so is *ultimately* a mode of spiritual activity, though to us it seems quite impersonal. When we think of two divine persons, some medium of intercourse is an equally necessary postulate ; but now we cannot think of the medium as being in any sense material : it must be spiritual in a higher sense than the physical world can be, in fact truly personal. We thus get a tri-personal unity.

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[1] Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 526.

Bishop Gore indicates some of the benefits we get from the conception of God as triune. He is not dependent on anything finite for His own experience. 'The intellectual relief is great when we find ourselves authorized to think of the very being of God as a movement of life in which the Father is eternally expressing Himself and knowing and being known, loving and being loved, in the Son and the Spirit.' We escape the idea of a static and monotonous Absolute. 'I can dimly conceive how there in the eternal Word and the Spirit was the counterpart, under conditions of eternity and perfection, of all that wealth of life which is gradually evolved on a lower plane in the process of creation.' We get light on the mystery of the One and the Many. 'There is no priority in Him of unity to multiplicity, and no priority of multiplicity to unity. The Eternal is one in many and many in one—one God : Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'[1]

THE INCARNATION

The doctrine of the Trinity emerges as the result of a full understanding of the meaning of the life of Jesus. It is the truth of the Incarnation that brings us to see the inner realities of God's being. In Jesus also, as man, God enters into the conditions and limitations of finite created being, and thereby we receive new light upon God's nature as Creator, and upon His relations to the world.

Creation we have to accept as a fact ; but, in view of our conception of God as triune, we can say that it is natural, something quite to be expected, that the divine Love, the divine Reason, the divine Activity would issue in such a work. In what follows, Valentine's very attractive exposition is, in part, reproduced. God's creation belongs to the field of His experience, and in this field, always and everywhere, He operates according to His nature, consistently with Himself. We may see the motive of Creation in the Father's love, the plan and purpose of Creation in the eternal Son, the Word, and the executive and sustaining forces of Creation in the Holy Spirit.

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[1] Gore, *Belief in Christ*, pp. 251–3.

In the Creation there must be both finite persons and a universe in which they can live, in fellowship with one another and with God. For finite personality there must be freedom, a field for growth and effort, and therefore the possibility of sin. We have, then, many possible grades and kinds of being, the lowest having, so to speak, the least of the divine reality in them, but the highest approaching nearer and nearer to His perfection. It follows that all progress towards Godlikeness will be in response to what God Himself reveals and gives, and His highest revelation will be in a perfect human life. ' It is not only conceivable, but highly probable, that God, in manifesting Himself through His universe, should at one point make the fullest revelation possible under the conditions of the universe. That revelation is made in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.'[1] ' In Christ the world is, so to say, at no distance from God. Here is the point where God and the universe blend and merge into one.'[2] In Christ, God makes the fullest possible revelation of Himself to His finite children, pours into the universe the greatest fullness of Himself that it can contain. So in the light of Christ we are to read the entire story of Creation. On the other hand, ' the only perfect response from the universe to God is the response of Christ. In Christ the whole world makes its only fitting answer to the call of God. All the relationships and responses throughout the world find their consummation in Christ. Christ is the world's meaning for God. In Christ the world realizes itself in the eternal purpose of God. Christ is the world offering itself to God in the one and only oblation possible to it. Christ is the concentrated reality of the universe.'[1]

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[1] Valentine, *What Do We Mean by God?* p. 195.

[2] Op. cit., p. 196.

Christ is, therefore, the one mediator, and His work is essentially an atonement. It seems to us that, had man never fallen, God's creative work must have been perfected by the incarnation of His Son ; but, sin having actually appeared, and on a vast scale, the atoning work became a great conflict and a great sacrifice. 'Except for man's sin Christ would have been welcomed as the Captain of our salvation ; because of sin He was rejected, just as all the claims and calls of the divine are always rejected by sinful mankind.'[2]

There remains the difficult problem of our Lord's nature. *Why* God became man is much easier to understand than *how* He became man. At least we may say that if God could create the material universe, so limiting Himself within a field of non-personal being, it is *less* of a limitation and *less* difficult to understand that He should take upon Himself the conditions of a finite *person.* 'The existence of God in the universe in degrees of divinity is a graded limitation determined by God Himself. And the limitation within the universe which is least restrictive of God's nature is the limitation of perfect personality. In Christ, therefore, God is supremely manifest.'[3] All we can ask for is that within the finite divine personality the perfect *quality* of the divine life shall be reproduced. By all the tests we can apply this condition is realized in the life of Jesus. But, surely, when Jesus offered to Thomas the

[1] Op. cit., p. 197. [2] Op. cit., p. 199. [3] Op. cit., p. 204.

particular tests he demanded, the divine reality was overwhelmingly greater than all tests ; and the doubting disciple in adoration said, ‘ My Lord, and my God.’

The life of Christ has a truly cosmic significance. It casts light on the meaning of the whole creative work of God, upon the problems of pain and of sin, and upon the status and destiny of man. In Christ we see that God’s purpose was to create a sinless humanity. In Him that purpose is achieved, and offered in Him as practicable for every man. In Christ sinful men are reconciled to God. It is equally clear that the life destined for man is an immortal life. In Christ, here and now, believing men enter into the experience of the life eternal. All the ways of Providence lead to this as their end.

In Christian theism we have a view of God as comprehending within His own eternal nature an infinitely rich variety and fullness of personal activity, and thus able to touch the life of finite persons through every faculty of their complex nature—inspiring, illuminating, redeeming, guiding. Thus God is not adequately thought of as a Cosmic Force, operating without regard to the spiritual needs of individuals, nor as a Power not ourselves making for righteousness, nor as a World-Soul, a vast and vague background of all finite being, but as the Father and Lover of souls, infinitely great in the ineffable majesty of the Godhead, yet one with us in Jesus Christ, meeting our needs at every point, and drawing us to Himself in Providence and Grace.

III

PREDESTINATION AND GRACE

Providence and Grace

In the Incarnation we come to see the perfecting of God's creative work, its meaning and goal. In the light of it we must interpret, as far as we can, the whole preparatory process. This matter will be taken up later. Here two great ideas also emerge, those of predestination and grace. In Christ, God is dealing with us on a higher plane than that of nature. In Christ, His whole heart is revealed, and through Christ all His greatest gifts are given. Here we are in the realm of what is wholly spiritual, and we want a term to comprise all the blessings of God imparted through Christ. This will include all the dispositions of God's goodness which prepared mankind for the coming of Christ, and still deal with all men as destined to be blessed in Him, though they have as yet never heard His name. The term we require is 'grace.' And, seeing that for men, as sinners, the greater part of God's higher manifestation in Christ has to do with their salvation from sin, His grace is mainly saving grace.

Therefore grace is the consummation of God's providential work. Necessarily it is interwoven with His providential care on the level of things physical and material ; but if we can be sure of grace, we have our highest interests secured. Whatever perplexities meet us on lower levels, we do not let them disturb us too much. 'He that spared not His own

Son, *how shall He not* with Him freely give us all things?' God's grace must be freely available for all men, for Christ is every man's inheritance. God's ultimate purpose in Creation is to unite every one of His children to Himself *in* Christ Jesus. In sending Christ, the appeal and offer of grace is made to all men, and it must and will be made available for all men, of all ages. 'God's love is grace and God's grace is love, and by God's gracious love we have fellowship with Him.'[1]

Pope says that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is only another form of the love of God, and this, again, only another form of the communion of the Holy Spirit. 'The love of the triune God is communicated by the Spirit through the redeeming grace of Christ.'[2]

God's Providence in nature must be working towards the same end and by the same methods as His Providence in grace, though the ways of its working may be more obscure. But as we learn to recognize His love in the operations of His grace, we also learn to recognize it in the order of things material. Self-sacrificing love is revealed on the Cross, and we come to see that it is the principle of all God's creative work. 'The fruits of the Spirit are the effects of grace,' and we come to realize that the same fruit is to be produced by all the contacts we have with God's world, even when these are most difficult and baffling to our understanding. We learn also that in all the conditions of our human social life the same principles are at work, and the same fruits may be brought forth. The grace of God is manifested in all the saving work of Christ, as made effective by the Holy Spirit, and in all that goes to the perfecting of the believer in Christ. At the same time, the work of divine grace is operative far beyond the bounds of the living Church, in all its influence on those who do not belong to it, who even oppose all religion, and in every spiritual influence anywhere at work in the lives of men.

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[1] Valentine, *What Do We Mean by God?* p. 215.

[2] Pope, *Compendium of Theology*, vol. i., p. 347.

The view here taken of grace implies an extension of its meaning beyond the ordinary usage of the New Testament. For the New Testament writers the grace of God belongs to the new dispensation of God's saving love and power which came in with Jesus Christ. The order of grace is in strong contrast with that of law. So mighty is the work of grace that it seems at first to be a completely new element introduced into human experience. For early Christian thought even the virtues of the noblest souls of the heathen world could be described as ' splendid vices ' : there is a clear-cut separation of the realm of nature from the realm of grace, and so of the work of Providence from that of grace. Grace ceased to operate when man fell, and was only restored by the advent of Christ. This theory does not do justice either to the meaning of nature or of grace. The gift of Jesus was the crowning manifestation of a grace which had been everywhere operative in all human life, in all the ages of human history. ' We cannot believe that God has ever left man alone ; He has been always seeking and drawing man to Himself, establishing that contact between His Spirit and the human spirit which is the essence of religion.'[1] ' We cannot maintain that there is a natural goodness which takes man up to a certain point, and that then supernatural grace comes in as a new factor. The difference is in the degree of man's response to the same divine influence which is always there.'[2] Thus, however unique and wonderful the work of grace effected through the Lord Christ, we must not confine our ideas of grace to that connexion alone. Wherever in human life there is goodness, there is the fruit of the Spirit and the evidence of divine grace. ' Grace is God Himself working in and influencing the soul, just as one great personality influences another, though far more effectively and consistently.'[1]

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[1] Emmet, in *The Spirit*, p. 178. [2] Op. cit., p. 181.

It is equally important to recognize the fact that the coming of Jesus did actually introduce into human life a mighty expansion and enhancement of the effectiveness of the divine grace. It brought a new revelation of the redeeming love and power of God which made possible on man's side a fuller response to the divine grace, and so a higher range of moral and spiritual achievement and progress. Man then first came to know all the riches of God's grace, and could enter into conscious fellowship with God, ' in Christ Jesus.'

An illustration of the oneness of the work of Providence with that of grace may be found in the methods of our Lord's earthly ministry. He cared alike for the bodies and the souls of men. To the paralytic, before He healed him, He said, ' Thy sins be forgiven thee.' When the woman who touched His garment in the crowd, and was cured, tried to slip away unnoticed, He prevented her ; because He had a spiritual gift for her, as well as a physical one. When the people followed Him into the desert, He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd, and taught them many things. It was the *same* compassion that would not allow them to go away physically hungry. So Christ's disciples, working in His Spirit to-day, are concerned for men's bodies as well as their souls. They believe that earthly conditions can be transformed, and men's lives made holy, healthy, and happy.

PREDESTINATION AND GRACE

It is in the light of God's grace that we must study the vexed problem of predestination. Is the universe a great, fixed system in which every least event is mechanically determined by unalterable laws ? In the realm of nature we see unity, order, adaptation, and progress ; but the whole may be so interpreted as if human life is an alien in this realm, whose laws treat it with complete indifference, so that single lives are tossed about amidst its mighty forces, which will at last destroy them. And what may or may not happen to them is, from their point of view, a matter of chance and accident.

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[1] Op. cit., pp. 165–6.

In the Christian view, the universe is a unity which culminates in Christ. You cannot understand the order of God's creative work until you bring Him in. The universe is planned, and as a material system it must have fixed laws, it must be, in a sense, a machine ; but it is a machine ordered for a spiritual purpose. Man is not an alien, but the *raison d'être* of all ; and the final purpose of God is to perfect mankind in and through His Incarnate Son. Everything is to be read and interpreted in the light of this final purpose. The Christ is 'the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all Creation.' Through Him and unto Him all things have been created. He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Here we have the Christian doctrine of predestination. God 'chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,' 'fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself,' and this 'according to the riches of His grace.' The supreme purpose of the whole creation of God is to bring many sons unto glory through Christ. And it follows that all things are ours—whether 'the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come'—ours in Christ.

God's purposes of grace and love are the precedent conditions of the whole creative order. The mechanism of nature has a real place and function; it is a discipline with a view to character. The world is a vale of soul-making ; our souls are given in order to be won. Now this supreme purpose of God reigns everywhere. Accident, from His point of view, is excluded. It is not enough to say that the general oversight of God is secure, whilst innumerable details are matters of chance. 'Can there really be contingency in detail if there is purpose on the whole? Does not purpose inevitably carry a control of the details—or at least of all that are essential?'[1] 'There are *no* unforeseen and unpreventable accidents, but only such as God in His wisdom allows in His working out of the huge problem of human destiny.'[2]

'Individual personal interests in the highest sense are absolutely safe in the keeping of God. Providence is necessarily individual—for a social realization which did not secure individual personal values would have failed at the spiritually vital core.'[3]

The fixity of general laws is only one part of the order of nature. The other part is their flexibility and adaptability. Of this we have innumerable examples in the uses to which man himself puts them, for special individual purposes. How much more complete must be the divine control? It must be perfectly easy for Him to bring them into such concurrences that the highest good of every child is secured. Thus chance is excluded from the divine point of view. From our point of view, there are a great many happenings that we put down to chance; but this simply means that we do not understand in detail how or why they happen, and cannot foresee them. But they are, in the first place, not outside God's control, and, in the second place, they serve a most valuable purpose for us as discipline. God's purposes are often higher and wider than we can see, and to trust Him amidst chances is to answer His appeal to our faith. Moreover, they bring the element of adventure into every man's life. They are a constant test of courage and endurance and resource. So taken, they are a highly valuable element of our spiritual education. Explorers voluntarily cut themselves off from the helps and safeguards of settled and secure social life, and go out into the unknown, for the joy of adventure. So the search for God may be a high adventure in every man's life. In human social relations a very considerable element of chance is encountered. Each of us lives in touch with other people, whose characters we more or less imperfectly understand, and whose actions we can very imperfectly foresee. Our greatest disasters and sufferings come from human ill will and greed and deceit. Here the discipline is severe, but for us personally it is beneficent. To meet ingratitude with kindness and hate with love is the greatest triumph of character. Whilst there is the added fact that by such meeting of evil with good we are actually destroying it, we are working with God Himself in the way of redemption. It is a path of suffering, but the suffering is not merely educative for us ; it is, in its degree, a continuation of the method and experience of the Cross.

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[1] Porteous, *Order and Grace*, p. 107.

[2] Op. cit., p. 250.

[3] Op. cit., p. 250.

The carrying out of God's eternal plan and purpose is conditioned by the fact of man's freedom. To think of God as saving and perfecting any man by His irresistible will is an absurdity. The problems of the divine freedom and foreknowledge and the relation of the freedom of man to the will of God may well be insoluble for philosophy ; but we have enough light upon them for practical purposes.

In respect of foreknowledge, we know that in the case of a man of high character we have a considerable amount of foreknowledge as to how he will act. We may not know in what situations of trial and difficulty he may be placed at any time, but we do know, for instance, that he will always be brave and honest and courteous, and that these qualities are none the less free in their operation because foreknown. Whether all the thoughts and words and deeds of my life here and hereafter are spread out like a map before the divine omniscience, I do not know. Personally, I do not think so ; but then I do not know in the least what are the conditions of omniscience in the divine Life, as it is beyond time. What I do know is that my love to God is as free as His love is to me. The doctrine of preordination has had a disastrous history in Christian thought since the time of Augustine, and especially since its formulation by Calvin. In his system, mankind as a whole, being totally depraved, merits nothing but perdition. Nevertheless, God in His mercy has chosen to save a certain number. These, the elect, *will* be saved, and all the rest of men doomed. The choice is final and irrevocable, and quite independent of any moral factors in the case of those chosen or rejected.[1] This is an extraordinary travesty of God's grace. The saved are saved by compulsion, which is the very opposite of grace. The lost are lost because God does not care enough about them. This must be so ; for, if God by His *fiat* can save some, He can save all, and, logically, if one may use such a term, He *ought* to save all. Of course, this is all in flagrant defiance of the great truths of the gospel, that God loves all, that He desires the salvation of all, that ' whosoever ' will has eternal life in Christ, and that this good news is to be proclaimed to all mankind. Such a doctrine could never have been built up at all, by Christian theologians, but for the argument of Paul in the ninth chapter of the Romans, in which God's absolute right is asserted, to do what He will with His creatures. But the Calvinistic case rests on the isolation from the whole argument of a single step of the argument, and the erection of that single premiss into an absolute principle. This is not merely logically indefensible, but it actually reverses the real meaning of Paul. Paul is arguing that the eternal purposes of God could never involve the exclusion of the Gentiles from salvation. He is claiming for God the right to bless all nations, and that all appearances to the contrary are deceptive. If God seemed to shut up any to unbelief, it was that He might in the end have mercy upon all. And so comprehensive is Paul's view that he regards even the stubborn unbelief of Israel as a temporary phase. God's grace will win His ancient people some day, and again a new and greater glory will shine through them upon the Gentiles.

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[1] John Buchan, in *Witch Wood*, has worked out a terrible example of the practical consequences of this doctrine.

Moreover, even when isolating Paul's claim of absolute freedom for God to do what He will with His creatures, that which lay at the back of his mind is ignored. Paul was not thinking of a God who is pure will, who could ever act in an arbitrary manner, contrary to or above all moral considerations. He was thinking of the God who had been revealed in Jesus Christ, and, when he claimed for Him absolute right, it was the absolute right or freedom of a *good* God, to be gracious.

Accepting, therefore, the fact of a great, comprehensive purpose, without which there could not be a universe at all, we must interpret its working from the point of view, not only of reason and will, but of love. How philosophically to reconcile the freedom of finite persons with the freedom of God's sovereign purpose we may not ever discover. 'A God that was not a creator, a God whose creatures had no independence, would not himself be really a God.'[1] What we actually realize in our experience is that thinking is free, and willing is free, and, above all, loving is free, and the idea of a love that is not free is quite self-contradictory.

The purposes of a loving God are just as unalterable as the laws of the physical world, but they operate on different lines. God's action will always be determined by His own unchanging grace and love. But there is nothing that is at once more fixed and unconquerable and at the same time more versatile than love. With God's love behind it as the ruling principle of His being, nature is not a closed system, but has always open possibilites for Providence. Still less, in the realm of purely moral and spiritual life, are the resources of grace limited. And so it is at least possible that sovereign love, the supreme power of the spiritual world, will at last find its full response in every finite life. No doubt, in theory, even finite wills might hold out for ever against that love ; but nothing could ever change its character. The divine action may be endlessly varied in the succession of temporal happenings, but the purpose that is thus expressed is above time altogether, it covers everything—past, present, and to come. 'God's way of ordering events is utterly misrepresented if it is conceived as a decreeing of them long before they happen. God's eternal willing of current fact is not a timeless willing, and though it is certainly not in our kind of time, it is best figured as the present willing activity of a Will which is even more on the spot than our will.'[1] What we may be sure of is that the very best will be done, here and now, because there is behind it the changeless purpose of an eternal Love. Clarke puts the matter in this way, that God has the power of guiding free beings from *above* their freedom, without interfering with it. 'Something is going forward in individual life, and in the movement of mankind at large, that men did not devise—something so truly in the nature of purpose as to be surely the work of mind ; something that accords in character with the character of God ; something that expresses and represents His higher sovereignty.'[2] But no man individually is under constraint. The influence at work is the superior attractive power of perfect love and wisdom. It is such power as is exercised in human society by the genius of great saints and thinkers.

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[1] Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 241.

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[1] Hogg, *Redemption From This World*, p. 189.

[2] Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 150.

On the grand scale, God's purposes for mankind have been worked out by the method of *election*. Bruce, in his *Providential Order*, has a very instructive chapter on this theme. The good of humanity has been increasingly secured by the special endowments and influence of chosen nations and chosen men. It would seem to be a necessity of the case that advance for all men should be the fruit of special and concentrated effort and sacrifice of the few. The nations to whom the world owes most have been small—at least, it was so at first. Concentration involves isolation. 'If the world is to be duly impressed with the supreme importance of righteousness, and with the value of a conception of God in which the divine and the ethical are intimately connected, there must be at least one people possessed with the passion for righteousness and cherishing a kindred idea of God, and able by its intensity and persistency to stamp its convictions indelibly on mankind.'[1]

The election of particular nations is not anything arbitrary, but corresponds to the fact that of the common endowments of all men different uses have been made. No doubt factors of climate and geography have played their part, especially as stimulating or retarding human activity, but that these are secondary in importance one may see, for instance, by comparing the achievements of Israel, Edom, and Philistia, or, on a wider field, of the Greeks and Phoenicians, both Mediterranean, seafaring races.

The election of nations is closely connected with the election of individuals. The attainments of Israel, Greece, and Rome were largely made possible by the influence of a few great prophets and thinkers and rulers of these nations. In them the genius of the nation was taken up and made effective to the fullest possible extent. Here, just as in the case of the nations as a whole, the purpose of the election was the general blessing. Individuals have been highly endowed for the enrichment of the life of all men. They have often been specially called to meet some deep need of their age, as plainly as John Wesley was called at a time of deadly religious stagnation in England. When the religious education of mankind has reached the age of maturity the need of isolation passes away, and the reverse process is started. When Christ came He brought a universal gospel, destined to overpass all barriers of race and caste.

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[1] Bruce, *Providential Order*, p. 287.

It has often been said that the age of great men is passing away. We are met by the prospect of a universal mediocrity that is not inspiring. Certainly, in the religious life of our time we see the general acceptance of moral and spiritual ideas which are due to Christianity, alongside of an equally general drift away from the living activities of the Church. The world has taken some valuable things from the Church, but the Church itself seems in danger of being submerged in the world. We ask for real leaders, like those of old, who shall awaken us from torpor and liberate our powers once more. At least let us not doubt that Providence is equal to the needs of all ages. Perhaps we sometimes forget that since Christ came we *have* One who is for all time the Light, and the Way, the Captain of Salvation. The need is for us lesser men to follow Him without misgiving, for His work cannot fail. He *must* reign. With or without us, that is predestined and sure. Besides this, why should we think that the age of great men is past? God's resources are not waning. 'We will continue to expect the appearance, at the appointed hour, of elect men, with great minds, great souls, great faith, hope, and devotion ; men of forceful individuality, predestined, mightily impelled, impelled, under a divine necessity, to expend their stored-up energy in a manner that shall redeem their time from oppressive commonplace, and give humanity a new impetus onwards in its way towards its appointed goal.'[1]

Thus we set out upon the exploration of the subject of Providence accepting the belief in a God who is Creator of all things and Father of spirits, whose activity, both in creation and redemption is co-ordinate with that of the Incarnate Son, and with that of the Holy Spirit, who illuminates and guides every man according to the measure of his faith. The work of creation and redemption is controlled by one eternal purpose of love, never pursued in any rigid and mechanical way, yet sure of its final perfect consummation. The next step of the inquiry has to do with the condition under which the divine providential activity may have free course in a world ruled by law. Here the question is whether the scientific view of the universe and of human life can be reconciled with the religious belief in God's providential care of individual men.

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[1] Bruce, *The Providential Order*, p. 292.

IV

TELEOLOGY AND PURPOSE

From the nature of God as personal we turn to the subject of the nature of the physical world, which is the sphere of God's providential activity. We may take up first the problem of teleology, the question as to whether in the Cosmic Order there is adequate evidence of purpose.

The universe may be taken as merely a vast mechanism, unfolding in countless new sets of reactions, which nevertheless are all implicit in the constitution of its ultimate elements. If so, it has no Creator and no goal. There is a period of integration, in the course of which man has appeared on the scene ; but all present systems are slowly disintegrating, and in time the universe will be in a state practically identical with that from which it started. And then it may begin all over again, or it may not. From this point of view, there is no purpose expressed in the structure of the universe as a whole, though, strange to say, it has put in a temporary appearance in that tiny fraction of it which we call humanity.

The last century has seen a remarkable advance in our knowledge of the world of living creatures, especially since the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species.* In this realm, order and adaptation are seen on a grand scale, and the whole system looks *as if* it were directed to a goal. But, strangely enough, it was the theory of natural selection, which is a purely mechanical theory, that brought the scientific world to believe in evolution ;

and natural selection seems to exclude the idea of purpose. In the fascinating study of evolution by Bergson, we have a strong reaction against purely mechanical theories ; but now we are taken to another extreme position. There is an original impetus of life, the *élan vital*, and this issues in countless new forms of living creatures, culminating in conscious persons ; but there is no purpose. Apparently the original, ultimate power is unconscious. For Bergson, full freedom implies the impossibility of purpose, at least as an ultimate ground of things. In the first theory, all life is fatally determined, and, in the second, it is just as completely indeterminate.

The old materialism has gone, but modern science, supported by philosophy to a great extent, is thoroughly mechanistic. This is what McDougall calls Modern Materialism, which definitely rules out purpose, and assumes that without it 'science can in principle achieve a complete and satisfactory account of the world of man, his nature, origin, and destiny.'[1] This he says, with justice, is 'adverse to every form of religion, however broadly defined, and obstructive to every form of moral effort.'[2]

It is therefore advisable to consider some of the evidence in favour of the theistic view that there is purpose everywhere. Naturally we must start with our own experience, in which purpose has a very important function. Purpose involves the idea of a goal or an ideal which we desire to reach. The activity we put forth to attain our goal has a causal efficacy, and ultimately gives us the only idea we can have of a true cause. Our purpose is nothing material, but has, none the less, constant and far-reaching effects in the material world. Our purposes work through the mechanism of our brain and body, but they cannot be themselves mechanistic. The fact is there, although, at present at any rate, we cannot conceive how a purpose can generate nervous movements. A great many of our purposes are carried out mechanically, as we say, by force of habit ; but these habits are not wholly mechanical. They once were fully purposive, and have been so often repeated that the desire to do them works subconsciously. Or we may say that they are uniform and regulated actions which are nevertheless freely chosen. We extend our bodily activities by means of machines. These machines always embody purpose, and require to be constantly controlled by the mind that originated them. We can make very complicated machines, in many ways self-compensating and self-regulating ; but the more perfect the machine, the more far-reaching is the purpose behind it. It can never, in any proper sense, run itself. We, therefore, may claim from our own experience that purpose, an entirely non-material entity, controls the mechanism of our body, which is given us as a means of self-expression, and enables us to originate and control a whole system of machinery, which is an extension of our bodily organs. It is, then, a reasonable hypothesis that, wherever we have a system of adjustments of a mechanical nature, we have something like purpose behind it ; and, if the universe itself appears to run as a very complicated and efficient machine, we are justified in believing that it embodies purpose. It is not a question of purpose *or* mechanism ; rather, *if* there is mechanism there is also purpose.

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[1] McDougall, *Modern Materialism*, p. 12. [2] Op. cit., p. 8.

The universe certainly appears to be a very complicated machine, and is so treated by science, which has reduced it to a set of self-acting laws. But if this is the whole truth, then either there is no God, or He has been so completely shut off from the world He has made that any idea of providential care is quite excluded also.

MECHANISM AND MIND

The real significance of the seeming automatism of the universe has been brought out in a striking argument by Turner, of which the chief points may be indicated. In his book, *Personality and Reality*, Turner shows that, whilst in works of art the design of the creator is plainly in evidence, in machinery the purpose of the designer tends more and more to be concealed. The dominance of the human mind over the physical world is most strikingly expressed in the invention of machines which reach an increasing complexity, the higher the mastery of the mind. At the same time, the greater the complexity of the machine, the less is the direct control of mind in evidence : the machine appears to be running itself. To an increasing extent, it *does* run itself. This appears in machines that execute elaborate operations that formerly required many human hands. Here the control of the operator is carried further and further back. He moves a switch, perhaps, and then a thousand adjusted and inter-related movements follow. He himself only *appears* in the first, almost momentary, movement. The subsequent movements appear to be, and are, automatic ; but behind the whole series there is the purpose of the designer. So mind ' necessarily means automatic mechanism, and the higher the mind, the more—and the more automatic—the mechanism, the more difficult must it be for a relatively low intelligence to discern mind.'[1] This mind, which is ' always characterized by a real and true freedom, is able to embody its own spiritual activities within a sphere which is wholly physical—the sphere of matter.'[2]

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[1] Turner, *Personality and Reality*, p. 130. A savage first confronted, say, with a loud-speaking wireless telephone would think there was here some strange living creature ; because he could not even remotely imagine how any such marvellous thing could be humanly contrived.

[2] Op. cit., p. 137.

'And thus, in the end, the material mechanism, while embodying as it actually does the active purposes, and therefore the very nature, of mind, at the same time replaces mind, and in so doing conceals it by its own physical constitution and by a pure necessity that seems at first sight wholly antithetic to spiritual freedom. And yet it is mind, although removed as it were from the actual scene of operations like a General directing modern warfare, that is the real source of the entire system, equally in its structure and its activity.'[1] And in this way matter 'has been elevated by mind to its own superior level and endowed with its inherent capacity for self-direction, so that its very necessity has been made to express the characteristic freedom of mind.'[2]

Now, if this typical relation of mind to physical mechanism is correctly stated, as we think it is, we have a principle applicable to the cosmos as a whole. For science, the universe is an extremely complicated machine, which appears to work automatically throughout. But, as in the case of highly complex humanly contrived machines, the absence of mind is only apparent : it may be, on the contrary, quite as necessary a hypothesis in this case as in the other. A machine can never be the *vera causa* of itself ; only a self, a spiritual agent, can be the true cause of anything at all.

A further consideration arises when we consider another necessary implication of mechanism ; it is that all mechanism, as such, is self-destructive. A man-made machine is always wearing itself out, and the cosmic machine is doing the same thing, as the law of degradation of energy expressly states. But in the story of life and mind, as actually embodied in history, we have, on the contrary, high plasticity, and the successive appearance of new and higher beings, asserting an ever-widening transcendence over the physical world. Such transcendence over the physical and mechanical again carries us back to one Supreme Mind. Turner's final conclusion is thus expressed, 'The material universe, then, being in itself a mechanism which, as mechanism, *cannot* evolve, while at the same time it actually *does* evolve—and evolves, further, on the vastest of scales which seem to possess no final limitation—*necessarily* implies the real existence of a mind which so dominates the whole realm of matter as progressively to embody therein, by means of perfectly definite, unalterable, and indestructible mechanisms, its own constructive—if not indeed creative—ideas. Such a mind therefore is a supreme self—the personal factor of the psycho-physical universe within which it is omnipotent.'[1] This argument appears to me entirely conclusive. Only it might be better to speak of cosmic mechanisms, not as unalterable and indestructible, but as unaltered and permanent up to date.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 138. [2] Op. cit., p. 138.

For the study of Providence, it is all to the good that we can find valid arguments by which the manifest automatism of the universe can be reconciled with the still deeper truth of the dominance of a Supreme Mind ; but, as it is stated above, that dominance lies behind the entire system, and is nowhere obvious in particular parts. There seems to be no room here for special providence, for the guidance of the individual. But the mode in which the human mind works in relation to its mechanical products is only one phase of its activities, and that not really the most important. We could do without so many machines, but we could not do without love. Human machines embody purposes directed to certain general activities ; they are intended for the use of classes of individuals. Even if a man made a special machine for his own particular use, and made no more than one, still, such a machine *could* be used by many other people in a similar way. Again, machines are designed for the manipulation of *things*, and where they have in view the needs of human beings, they only touch them in their material and sensuous relations. An enormous amount of machinery is simply designed to carry peoples' bodies about, as swiftly as possible, from one place to another. But the relation of human purpose to the moral and spiritual ends of life is of far greater importance than its working in the physical world. The uses to which persons put the machinery which is at their disposal are of far more importance than the actual creation of the machinery. It is much more important that we should use our machines for good and right ends than that we should have machines; and here we come to that in the expression of human purpose which is particular and personal. It makes no difference to the action and utility of a motor-bicycle whether it is ridden by a good man or a bad one, but there is an immense difference in the human situation between a thief rushing away with his booty from the scene of his crime, and a father hastening to bring a doctor to the help of his child. It is one of the scandals of human life that so great a part of our machinery should be aimed at the destruction of our fellow men. We do not wonder at the suggestion that we should cease for a while our exploration of the physical world, and learn to know and master ourselves better. Certainly the ends and purposes for which we *use* our machines are particular, moral, and personal. The range of human purpose is far wider than appears merely in the designing of machinery. It is at least as characteristically seen in the realms of art and in the moral relations of persons. A mother lives for her children, each one being valued and served as an individual. For the welfare of each child all the machinery of physical things at her disposal is employed. All this activity is non-mechanical, and yet controls mechanism. It is collateral with the mechanically expressed purpose, but of a higher grade. It does not come into the purview of science, except as the mental processes involved may be analysed and classified. When, therefore, we are dealing with the universe as a whole, including persons, with their manifold ways of expressing their purposes, may we not believe that something analogous holds good? If the universe as mechanism involves as its ground a supreme purposive Mind, are we not equally constrained to believe that it also involves a supreme purposive Goodness? If in human affairs mechanism is always at the service of personal ends, working from individuals for the good, and, alas, often for the harm, of individuals, may we not look for something similar in the nature of Reality? As, in the relations of man to man, all this escapes the net of science, the same may also be the case in the relations of God to man. We may see evidences of it in the 'categorical imperative' of duty, and in the universal instinct of prayer, and in the sense of beauty. Here the very nature of Reality is manifesting itself to us in a far higher region than that of mechanism. As each man for himself responds to the call of duty, to the call to pray, to the appeal of beauty, we may believe he is following a personal divine guidance. And we may believe that the divine love, of which these things are manifestations, has an infinitely wide command of the *mechanism* of the physical world, and is using it for the blessing of each soul as it responds to the divine call. The various modes of purpose are working collaterally and in perfect harmony for the supreme end, which is only general and universal as it comprises the particular needs of every single individual. Here is something which science as such has nothing to do with, but has no right at all to question.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 158.

Teleology Without Purpose

There is a recent presentation of the problem of teleology by an American writer which is of exceptional interest, and deserves more than a passing reference. Henderson, in his *Fitness of the Environment*, gives a detailed and elaborate study of the properties of those materials out of which the intricate systems of organic life are built up, and without which they would be impossible. No summary can do justice to the exposition ; but the main points may be given. The thesis is that the fitness of the environment to support living creatures is as important a factor as the fitness of organisms to live in that environment. The latter factor has been studied in the greatest detail, but the former factor has been almost entirely neglected since the modern science of biology has arisen. In studying the environment of living organisms, the general cosmic conditions which make possible a planet upon which there shall be an adequate and regulated sufficiency of light and heat, of air and water, are considered, and then a careful analysis of the properties of the elements and compounds by means of which the intricate systems of organisms are made possible is given. It is shown, for instance, that the properties of water and carbonic acid constitute unique maximal conditions for the support of living creatures which no other chemical combinations could possibly give. Thus, ' water, of its very nature, as it occurs automatically in the process of cosmic evolution, is fit, with a fitness no less marvellous and varied than that fitness of the organism which has been won by the process of adaptation in the course of organic evolution.'[1] ' In the world of modern science a fit organism inhabits a fit environment.'[2]

In the ocean, the primitive abode of life, the efficacy of water in combination especially with carbonic acid gives a further maximal condition of fitness. 'No philosopher's or poet's fancy, no myth of a primitive people has ever exaggerated the importance, the usefulness, and above all the marvellous beneficence of the ocean for the community of living things.'[1] Thus 'the fitness of the environment is one part of a reciprocal relationship of which the fitness of the organism is the other.'[2] This perfect fitness is due to the unique characteristics in particular of three elements—carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen ; and in the absence of such unique characteristics life would not be possible. But these characteristic forms of matter exist in just this state of fitness to support life *antecedently* to any form of life, or any of its adaptations. It is quite impossible to regard this antecedent fitness as accidental. 'Hence we are obliged to regard this collocation of properties as in some intelligible sense a preparation for the processes of planetary evolution.'[3] It follows that cosmic and biological evolution are one. They 'constitute a single orderly development that yields results not merely contingent, but resembling those which in human action we recognize as purposeful. For, undeniably, two things which are related together in a complex manner by reciprocal fitness make up in a very real sense a unit—something quite different from the two alone, or the sum of the two, or the relationship between the two. In human affairs such a unit arises only from the effective operation of purpose.'[4] And so we have reached the conclusion, a very important one, that 'where science is most self-sufficient, at the very basis of physical science itself, *if anywhere*, teleology is at work.'[5] 'If anywhere,' is rather strange ; for Henderson's argument has demonstrated that it is actually there. We have, so far, an exposition of the far-reaching presence of a teleological principle that embraces the inorganic and the organic realms in one indissoluble unity. This is a most welcome argument for any one who believes in God and Providence. It *is* Providence, on the greatest scale of all. Nevertheless, in the last few pages of his book, Henderson attempts to deprive theology of any benefit it might gain from his argument. He says, 'Science has finally put the old teleology to death. Its disembodied spirit, freed from vitalism and all material ties, immortal, alone lives on, and from such a ghost science has nothing to fear.'[1]

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[1] Henderson, *The Fitness of the Environment*, p. 131.

[2] Op. cit., p. 132.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 190.
[2] Op. cit., p. 271.
[3] Henderson, *The Order of Nature*, p. 192.
[4] Henderson, *The Fitness of the Environment*, p. 279.
[5] Op. cit., p. 301.

We ask in bewilderment what is the character in which the 'new' teleology differs from the old, which makes it so superior, and we find that the term 'teleology' is now being used for a principle or process 'from which all implication of design or purpose has been completely eliminated.' Thus the connexion between the physical properties of matter and the nurture of living creatures which we have been considering is teleological and non-mechanical, but *not* purposive. The secret seems to be that, whilst we think in terms of purpose, the universe is really evolving simply as a mechanism. The word 'teleology' is just a convenient term to indicate the systematic unity of the whole. So purpose is a mere 'appearance,' and our thought, being itself a product of the whole, is equally mechanistic in its real nature. The new teleology is surely confusion worse confounded; it is simply mechanism writ large, masquerading as purpose.

One wonders how anybody could execute such an amazing *volte-face*. There may be a hint in a reference to Driesch (p. 296), where Henderson speaks of the principle of individuality as a 'vitalistic preconception.' It is just where the individual comes in that the complete and full activity of purpose is seen. To abstract from the individual is necessary for science ; but that means that science can never attain a complete philosophy, and has no right, from its special and limited point of view, to bar out purpose everywhere.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 311.

There may be a legitimate impatience with piecemeal and short-sighted applications of the idea of purpose, as when sheep are supposed to have been created with wool on their backs in order to supply men with clothes. That is not a legitimate scientific explanation, of course ; but science need not worry about it. The proper criticism of all such judgements is from a wider point of view. They may be true enough, and yet only a very small fraction of the truth.

McDougall states Henderson's position in the following form : ' Henderson accepts, as the inevitable conclusion of his careful argument from a vast range of well-established facts, the view that some teleological agent, some designing and creative Mind, in short, God, made or arranged the material universe in such a way that, though the seat of mechanical processes only, it has produced living organisms (including man) which are also the seat of mechanistic processes only.'[1] But Henderson is extremely careful never to admit an *agent* anywhere. He grudgingly allows the theory of the existence of such an Agent to be reasonable, but regards the problem as insoluble.

Two of McDougall's general criticisms of this position may be mentioned. First, it is a radical error to regard teleological causation and mechanical causation as opposed and mutually incompatible. The first part of this chapter has attempted to indicate their true relations. Another error in treating of the question of purpose, is to ignore entirely the most characteristic and complete activities of purpose as a real cause in human life. ' The effort to demonstrate the unreality of purpose is, in short, a striking demonstration of purposive activity, a teleological activity that seeks to prove its own impossibility. In comparison with it the act of sawing off the branch on which one sits appears as a highly rational procedure.'[1]

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[1] McDougall, *Modern Materialism*, p. 276.

Therefore, we will be grateful for the new light on the fact that the material world had been most wonderfully prepared, we will dare to say designed, as the abode of living creatures, by the Creator who, through the mechanical conditions He has brought into being, has made possible such an endless diversity of living forms, and has made man 'an agent as well as an instrument,' and 'given him effective power of teleological causation in order that he might co-operate in the Great Design.'[2]

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[1] Op. cit., p. 281.

[2] Op. cit., p. 278. See also Appendix 3, 'Philosophy and Science,' p. 253.

V

CREATION AND EVOLUTION

THE subject of evolution is bound to receive some attention, since it belongs to the general problem of teleology, and, so far as it can be established, must be recognized as implicating Providence at every step.

The general idea of evolution, or development, has been present in philosophic and scientific thought from the very beginning, and, in modern thought, was fundamental, for instance, for Kant, and Goethe, and Hegel. What is wholly modern is the theory of evolution by descent. This was fully worked out, along one line, by Lamarck, before Darwin's time, but was strenuously opposed by scientists, until the publication of the *Origin of Species* turned the tide in its favour. Darwin's theory was exclusively concerned with the world of living organisms, and here it is simply a theory of continuous growth, the theory that all living creatures, present and past, are linked together by descent from more primitive races, until we get to some extremely simple or generalized type or types from which all species of plants and animals alike have been derived. When the idea is applied to the non-living world, the essential element of growth disappears. The atomic system is said to have been evolved, as also the universe and the solar system. What the evolution of atoms may mean it is not easy to say. That they are built up in a systematic way from protons and electrons, we accept ; also that a very complex atom may break down into a less complex one ; but there is nothing here comparable to the birth, growth, and death of organisms. The solar system is said to have evolved, by which term an immense cycle of cosmic changes is meant, in the course of which the sun has been condensed out of the original nebula, and the planets thrown off. At a certain point the earth cooled down sufficiently to make it available for living creatures ; but from the cosmic point of view this did not happen until it was far down the road to final dissipation. 'As far as we can judge, our part of the universe has lived the more eventful part of its life already ; what we are witnessing is less the rising of the curtain before the play than the burning out of candle-ends on an empty stage on which the drama is already over.'[1]

In all this there is nothing comparable to organic evolution except the fact of ordered change; but the change is towards the dead level of perfect equilibrium. Again, we hear of social evolution. There is less incongruity here in the use of the word ; but the factors that make for the historical development of human society are of a very different kind from those that determine organic evolution. In social evolution we have the conscious use of memory, and the guidance of life according to ideals. Man becomes increasingly master of his environment, and uses it for personal and social ends. This is largely a process of education. Here spiritual factors take precedence of all organic factors.

It is in the study of biological evolution, or evolution proper, that the special problems of Providence are found, and to this department we will chiefly confine ourselves. Biological evolution has been understood as taking place in two wholly different modes. According to the 'pre-formation' theory, every new form of life is latent in the old. For instance, all the varieties of cultivated apples have resulted from the unlocking of actual constituents of the original wild crab-apple. This view is now practically abandoned for the theory of ‘ epigenesis,’ or ‘ emergent ’ evolution, according to which the new forms are regarded as genuinely new, and as containing factors that are indeed developed on the basis of the old ones, and continuous with them, but not as pre-formed. The phrase used in this connexion is ‘ creation by evolution.’ This we shall accept as usually intended by biologists. In the foreword to the essays entitled *Creation by Evolution*, H. F. Osborn says, ‘ Evolution is the incessant appearance of new qualities, new characters, new powers, new beauties, for which there is no antecedent in experience, and no evident promise in the germ itself.’

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[1] Jeans, *The Wider Aspects of Cosmogony* ; Trueman Wood Lecture.

Biologists make no secret of the fact that the evolution hypothesis cannot be strictly demonstrated. At Cape Town, in his address to the Zoological Section of the British Association, Professor Watson said that this hypothesis was accepted by biologists, not because it had been observed to occur, or was supported by logically coherent arguments, but because it did fit all the facts of taxonomy, of palaeontology, and of geographical distribution, and because no alternative explanation was credible. The fact is accepted by nearly all biologists ; but the manner of it, and the mechanisms by which it has been brought about, are still very much in dispute. Professor Watson said that both the Lamarckian and Neo-Darwinian theories rest on a most insecure basis, inasmuch as the assumptions on which they rest have seldom been seriously examined. Nevertheless, biological evolution is a very good working hypothesis, and biologists will continue to use it, unless and until something better is found.

It is very important to distinguish the facts connected with the history of organisms from the theory of evolution. Hardly any of the relevant facts were known before the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the rise of the science of geology set the whole history of the earth in a new light. The main facts of that history are contained in the record of the rocks, which reveals that life appeared upon the earth many millions of years ago, and began in one-celled organisms. Here the actual evidence for the most ancient forms of life is necessarily indirect. Next comes a long period showing fossil remains of nothing but marine invertebrates, trilobites, and the like ; then the age of fishes, then of amphibians, then of reptiles. In each of these vast periods the classes of creatures named reached the climax of their development, and dominated the field of life. They did not subsequently disappear, but in the following eras occupied a relatively less important position. Not till we get to the very late Tertiary Period do we reach the age of the dominance of mammals and birds. It must be added that human remains and artefacts carry us back hundreds of thousands of years ; and from these remote ages we have evidences of technical skill and true artistic power, besides the indications of belief in a future life which are afforded by the methods and accompaniments of the burial of the dead. There are many other groups of facts which are brought into a unity by the evolution theory, but we need not here consider them : it is the geological record that has been the great crux for theology.

When considering the ‘ proofs ’ of evolution by descent, which is invariably intended when we meet the term ‘ evolution ’ in modern biological works, it is important to keep in mind the fact that what these ‘ proofs ’ strictly establish is the ordered development and ideal kinship of all living creatures, and not necessarily their derivation from one another by descent. This contention is carefully worked out by Rudolf Otto in his work entitled *Naturalistiche und*

Religiöse Weltansicht. He shows that the whole evolutionary series might be regarded as the work of Nature 'raising the type of her creatures from stage to stage, developing and expanding each new type from an earlier one, yet keeping the later analogous to and recapitulative of the earlier, recording the earlier by means of vestigial and gradually dwindling parts.'[1] Thus there is not *necessarily* direct descent, but the development of an ordered plan. Even the recent test by transfusion of blood, considered almost as the last word in proof of descent, Otto regards only as establishing systematic relationship, and not necessarily descent.

To such an argument it might be replied that the theory of descent gives to all the evidences of kinship a greater value and a higher meaning, especially as allowing to the creature a share of responsibility and creativeness, and also as making the problems of degeneration and dysteleology generally less intractable.

EVOLUTION AND CREATION

The theory of evolution is, from the point of view of theology, a theory of continuous creation. Taken by itself, it is in no way whatever inconsistent with theism. In fact, no sound basis for any theory of organic evolution can be found, except in theism. It is not a question of creation *or* evolution ; for evolution is not a cause, but a mode, a means. The real cause must be Mind. Needham, who is a thorough-going mechanist in biology, rejects absolutely the idea that mind and its processes can be explained or described in physico-chemical terms ; and he concludes that the most justifiable opinion is 'that life in all its forms is the phenomenal disturbance created in the world of matter and energy when mind comes into it.'[2] He closes his essay by endorsing the words of Sir Thomas Browne, ‘ Thus there is something in us that can be without us and will be after us though indeed it hath no history what it was before us and cannot tell how it entered into us.’ [1]

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[1] Op. cit., p. 100. English trans., p. 131. See further on Otto's work, pp. 251–3.

[2] *Science, Religion, and Reality,* p. 251.

In his essay in *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, Taylor works out the problem under consideration very clearly. He says, ‘ Every evolution presupposes both a material and agencies acting on the material which are anterior to the evolution itself, and the process of accounting for these *prae-supposita* as the results of a still earlier evolution cannot “ go to infinity.” Somewhere behind all evolutions and supplying all with “ material ” and “ driving-force ” there must be the strictly eternal.’ [2] ‘The full and ultimate cause of every effect in a process of evolution will have to be found not simply in the special characters of its recognizable antecedents, but in the character of the eternal which is at the back of all development. And this must contain “ in a more eminent manner ” all that it bestows, and may contain much more, since we must not infer that what it has hitherto bestowed is all it can have to give.’ [3] Put briefly, this means that evolution presupposes God. In particular, the origin of personality can be assigned to no process of evolution. ‘ My mind has never, at any stage of its development, been a part of the mind of a parent or parents.’ [4] ‘ The appearance of a new psychical subject of experience is a fact which is and must remain inexplicable by any theory of development.’ [5] ‘ In dealing with the *origination* of the fresh personality we seem to have reached a point where it is inevitable that we should introduce into science itself that very notion of a new “ creation ” which we rightly exclude from the physical sciences because it would be superfluous there.’ [6]

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[1] Op. cit., p. 257.
[2] Taylor, op. cit., p. 454.
[3] Op. cit., p. 460.
[4] Op. cit., p. 461.
[5] Op. cit., p. 462.
[6] Op. cit., p. 462.

Similarly Otto : ‘ No psyche is simply derivable from other psyches. What a child receives from its parents by “ heredity ” are factors which, taken together, amount to more than the mere sum of them. The synthesis of these is at once the creation of something new and peculiar, and what has been handed down is merely the building material.’ [1]

By way of digression, we may remark that this unique position of (finite) personality introduces a special order of dominance into the physical realm, and a special order of relation to God Himself. It is on the ground of the implications of personality, thus regarded, that our whole view of Providence is developed in this essay.

If we look at evolution from the Bergsonian point of view, as a process of change, pure and simple, we arrive at an Absolute which *is* change—a truly baffling conception. On the contrary, we believe that the superior reality of the Eternal is quite unwarrantably denied ; since change can have no meaning except for a consciousness that transcends change. ‘ Change is nothing more than a recognized relation between the different members of a movement or process, but that relation is a fact of intelligence, and it needs intelligence to give it coherence and meaning. In the end, therefore, no doctrine of universal change can be philosophically grounded or made a justifiable assumption except it be affirmed as a part of the general relation which exists between an abiding cosmic Intelligence, or supreme Creative Personality, and its works.’ [2] ‘ There can be neither change, relation, process, nor evolution except to an intelligence that survives and transcends the whole process. Our concept of life, change, and relativity is metaphysically consistent only with the assumption that behind all is Creative Personality.'[1]

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[1] Otto, *Naturalistiche und Religiöse Weltansicht*, p. 252. English trans., p. 327. See also, Dykes, *The Divine Worker*, p. 164.

[2] Flewelling, *Creative Personality*, pp. 40–1.

If evolution presupposes God, we are left to compare two *methods* of creation, the one by continuous evolution, and the other by special creation. Strictly speaking, the completely contrasted methods would be, continuous creation, operating through evolution, or instantaneous creation, not in six days, nor in one, but in a moment. In Genesis we have not this, but a graded series of creative acts, having well-marked stages. What the geological record shows us is a remarkable series of forms of plant and animal life, in a progressive order of development, vast numbers of which have perished to make room for others, until, late in the history, mammals have appeared, and lastly man. On the one theory all these successive forms have sprung, independently of one another, 'out of the everywhere into here.' All their intimate similarities, and the order of their succession, are then explained as due to the pre-ordained plan. On the other theory, all the different species have arisen by continuous growth, one from another, their differences being due to variations arising spontaneously in individuals, and transmitted to their offspring. From this point of view, the creatures have been co-operating with the Creator in their own creation, and the order of their development has been towards an increasing command of their environment, and an increasing freedom, until we reach an organism capable of being the organ of a full personal life, in touch with the mind and will of the Creator. Now when we consider the flood of light which the adoption of the evolution theory has cast upon the whole world of nature, and the enormous stimulus it has given to the exploration of the animate realm, we cannot but be grateful for it, whatever its defects and limitations. The idea of a mighty creative purpose unfolding itself in infinite richness and variety down long ages, and all through taking its own creatures into partnership, and surely moving to a spiritual goal, is worthy of God, and to most thoughtful minds is far more appealing than that of special creation.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 168.

The great resistance that first arose in Christian thought to the theory of evolution was due to two main causes, namely to the apparent denial of all purpose in the progress of animate nature, and to the supposed dethronement of man from his true dignity. It was heightened by the false philosophy which elevated evolution into an all-sufficient, causal theory. It is to be hoped that the clouds of misconception are clearing away, in spite of the present reactionary movement, which is chiefly, but by no means only, confined to America.

The doctrine of special creation has its own peculiar difficulties. It was simple enough when attention was only paid to the few species that man had practical acquaintance with. Any one can tell that a camel is different from a horse ; and it was not absurd to think of Adam passing in review all the creatures, and naming them. But the actual number of species, now and then, is to be counted by millions[1] ; and that provides a very different situation. Moreover, even now, there is great difficulty in knowing what are the limits of a species—in fact, what a species is at all. Some are easily distinguished, but others are not. For instance, hawthorns in Europe are few and not hard to distinguish ; but in North America they may run to seven hundred closely allied species. There are groups of plants and animals which baffle all schemes of classification ; and the high probability is that in these cases new species are actually in process of formation.

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[1] Herbert Spencer calculated the number at ten millions ; but others would consider this a very low estimate.

One difficulty that obviously emerges from the theory of continuous creation is that Providence appears to be resolved into Creation. On the theory of special creation, the world and every sort of creature came into being a long time ago by a creative *fiat*, and then creation was ended, once for all. What succeeded was the work of preservation, the work of Providence. But there can be no difference in principle between the work of Creation and of Providence.[1] The work of Providence is the necessary continuation by the Creator of His creative work. Jesus Himself repudiated the idea that there can be any intermission of the divine activity. 'The Father worketh even until now, and I work.' The beneficent divine activity knows no Sabbath-rest. The world is altogether a world of becoming; and new forms of creative energy are constantly emerging. 'They are created now, and not from of old; and before their day thou heardest them not.'

The doctrine of special creation is not really opposed to that of continuous creation, if it is only carried far enough. What *does* break down is the doctrine of the creation of kinds or species, with the corollary that these kinds are practically permanent and self-maintaining when once they are created. What we have to account for, in the last resort, is individuals; and there is a divine creative power that is the true cause of every individual life, whether of the lower creatures or of man. A concrete, individual being can only arise as the result of a definite creative act, by an Agent.[2] Here we have special creation on a scale altogether vaster than that of the creation of species, and it is continuous and all-pervasive.

In the animate world we have stability and progress, order and novelty, the genuinely new arising on the ground of the old and permanent, because the whole system is the expression of one creative Mind. Creative and providential action interpenetrate, and are always at work, realizing one increasing purpose, which culminates in man, and finally in the Man Christ Jesus. The least and the highest are equally cared for. ' Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father.' ' It was the good pleasure of the Father through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things upon earth, or things in the heavens.'

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[1] Though certainly a difference in *mode*. See p. 246.

[2] Cf. Bowne, *Theism*, p. 106.

EVOLUTION AND PURPOSE

It is a wrong use of the evolutionary theory which has constituted it into a denial of all purpose in nature, and so a denial of Providence. In particular, much mischief has been wrought by the application to ethics of a naturalistic evolutionary theory, and by a similar extension of the theory of natural selection to human social life. These errors require some consideration, seeing that they seriously affect our understanding of God's ways with man.

The question of purpose is fundamental ; it has already been touched upon from the point of view of metaphysics, but is now to be considered in connexion with its bearing on current views of biological evolution. The scheme, as generally accepted, can be briefly set out. We have, to start with, organisms and their environment. The first important fact that arises is that every living creature has powers of multiplication far in excess of the capacity of the environment. The individuals of a species may produce in any season hundreds or thousands of offspring ; and yet the average numbers of the species remain constant. Here is destruction on a great scale ; and we get the picture of all species struggling together for room to live, with only a small proportion successful in each generation. Only the healthiest will survive, or those a little better suited to their surroundings than their fellows. The next fact is that every individual varies slightly from every other, for different reasons, and some variations are fixed in subsequent generations by heredity. It is clear that any variations in an individual that make it better suited to the environment will give it an advantage in the struggle for existence. It is more likely to survive ; and its advantages may be transmitted to its offspring. Such variations, accumulated in various lines of descent, will in time give rise to new species.

Thus the environment acts as a sieve ; it lets some creatures through, but stops the great majority. It creates nothing ; it only destroys. The positive factors are the living activity of the creature, with its wonderful power of reproducing offspring showing the same characters, and at the same time capable of heritable variations. Here *granted* organisms, and *granted* variations, the way the environment will affect them is worked out. The process is purely mechanical, and it is supposed to have a sort of magical efficacy ; so that the human hand, and eye, and even intelligence are said to be ' produced ' by natural selection.

' *Granted* variations ' ; but here is the mystery. What is the origin of the variations ? Darwin really told us nothing about origins at all. He said variations were ' accidental.' It is a convenient word ; but it just meant that he did not know how they originated. The critical importance of the question is now better understood ; and for long scientists have been trying to discover the secret of variations, or of mutations, but with no success at all. A great deal of new light has been cast on the way variations go, by Mendel's discovery that unit-characters of an organism can be inherited separately. A whole new science has arisen on the basis of his discoveries ; but no one knows how or why any unit-character comes to be. You can shuffle and recombine, to any extent, but you cannot create. You have to wait till nature throws up a mutation ; and then you know what you can do with it.

There is, however, a definite advance in scientific thought, inasmuch as the reality of genuinely *new* factors, which are not merely a re-shuffling of old ones, is now generally accepted. When life appears on the earth, there is something new. It may be based on some peculiar colloidal conditions of matter, but it is more than a colloid. When mind appears, it is something new ; and similarly when self-consciousness appears. This acceptance of the genuinely new is expressed in the term ' emergence.' There is *more* in the new form than there was in its parents. Thus heritable variations, or mutations, are ' emergents ' ; and by reason of these emergents evolution is made possible. But, as in the case of Darwin's ' accidental ' variations, the later term amounts to confession that we do not know how or why emergents happen. We must simply accept them ' with natural piety.' When we have got them we can fit them into our mechanistic scheme, and all goes merrily.

It should now be quite plain that the Darwinian method entirely eliminates from the purview of evolution all the facts that could possibly indicate purpose, and takes for granted at the very outset of the inquiry all the facts that *do* indicate purpose. Thus, taken as it stands, it cannot explain the broad, progressive advance of organisms from the unicellular condition to the status of man. This is obvious, since under natural selection organisms are equally free to stand still, or to advance, or to deteriorate ; and they do all these things. In each case equally you have the ' survival of the fittest,' a phrase which seems to mean a great deal, but, for evolution, only means that the survivors survive. We are quite sure that variations cannot really be accidental or indefinite ; they are only assumed to be so for the purpose of working the theory. Actually, principles have to be brought in, supplementary to natural selection, and allowing for directivity. There is what is called ' orthogenesis,' as in Eimer's statement that ' variation everywhere takes place in quite definite directions which are few in number.' But direction means purpose, and is something quite different from Darwin's indefinite variations in all directions impartially. There are many correlated variations which cannot possibly have arisen in direct connexion with one another. Many lines of ascent are followed by series of species exactly as if a definite goal were in view. In particular, Lankester said of man that he is ' the predestined outcome of an orderly—and to a large extent " perceptible "—mechanism.'[1] ' Man forms a new departure in the gradual unfolding of Nature's predestined scheme.'[2]

We have, therefore, in hand the wonderful progressive series of organisms, assuming forms of the highest efficiency, and often of the highest beauty, occupying the whole realm of nature ; and, as Mind must be the ultimate cause of everything, we see here spread before us the manifested purpose of God. Into the scope of that purpose we can now bring all our new beginnings, from the least to the greatest, all our mutations along the whole line. These are all steps in the unfolding of God's purpose. Science cannot account for them, because they are the points at which the divine transcendent activity creatively originates beings of a higher status.[3] In particular, in the creation of individual personalities that transcendence is plainly manifested. By way of confirmation, one quotation may be given from Lloyd Morgan's *Emergent Evolution.* It indicates the position of a scientist who, as such, is an out and out mechanist. ‘For better or worse, while I hold that the proper attitude of naturalism is strictly agnostic, therewith I, for one, cannot rest content. For better or worse, I acknowledge God as the Nisus through whose Activity emergents emerge, and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed. Such is my philosophic creed, supplementary to my scientific policy of interpretation.’[1]

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[1] Lankester, *The Kingdom of Man*, p. 5.

[2] Op. cit., p. 14.

[3] See Appendix, 2. Divine Transcendence and Immanence, especially pp. 248–53.

In this survey the case for design in nature is very imperfectly indicated. Those who care to follow it further should read the remarkably able chapter in Schiller’s *Humanism*, entitled ‘Darwinism and Design.’ In fact, the philosophic bearings of the evolution theory have been admirably discussed by several authors. I think the philosophers know more about science than the scientists about philosophy. This is inevitable, but somewhat to be regretted.

In the whole process of animate nature we may see disclosed the method of the divine Providence. Man himself is the goal of the whole orderly movement, which is shot through and through with moral and spiritual purpose. Man’s physical organism, together with all the wealth of his animate environment, are the fruits of long-continued discipline and upward striving, the gifts to him that come of age-long travail, in which all creatures are partners. Paul had a true vision when he said, ‘All nature awaits with eager expectation the appearing of the Sons of God. For nature was made subject to imperfection—not by its own choice, but owing to Him who made it so—yet not without hope that some day nature, also, will be set free from enslavement to decay, and will attain the freedom which will mark the glory of the children of God.’

Evolution and the Status of Man

One reason for the dislike shown towards the evolution theory is that it puts man into such a humiliating position. As to that there may be two opinions. According to the evolution theory, man's body is the highest product of an immensely protracted and strenuous period of development. Countless organisms have explored ways of betterment, though some have chosen easy paths, and have deteriorated. The result has been a marvellous wealth of animate forms of every kind of excellence and beauty. On one line alone has there been an advance so restrained and wise that along it a body has been won capable of being the organ of a self-conscious and spiritual life. There is nothing here for shame. On the alternative view, God has given to man, by special *fiat*, a body made out of materials identical with those from which the lower creatures are made—muscles, nerves, blood, bones, identical processes of breathing, digesting, and secreting, identical sexual arrangements. In the conformation of the body, He has been practically taking as a model the body of an anthropoid ape ; for the anatomy, apart from brain-capacity, is to the minutest particulars the same. As we cannot suppose that the Creator had run short of ideas, it seems He was determined to teach man humility. At any rate, on the score of dignity, the evolutionary method seems preferable.

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[1] Morgan, *Emergent Evolution*, p, 36.

On this matter Otto says, ' Even if there be really descent, the difference may quite as well be so great that man, in spite of physical relationship, might belong to quite a new category far transcending all his ancestors in his intellectual characteristics, in his emotional and moral qualities. There is nothing against the assumption, and there is much to be said in its favour, that the last step from animal to man was such an immense one that it brought with it a freedom and richness of physical life incomparable with anything that had gone before—as if life here realized itself for the first time in very truth, and made everything that previously had been a mere preliminary play.'[1] And, in any case, 'his nearness, analogy, or relationship to what is beneath him is in no way increased by descent, or rendered a whit more intimate or more disturbing.'[2]

Untold mischief has been wrought by the misuse of the principle of natural selection, and this chiefly because it has been regarded as the dominant factor in evolution, and then applied, without any qualification, to the interpretation of human social progress. In biology, the working of the principle has been set forth, again and again, in such terms as those which Huxley employed when he said that the essence of the struggle for existence is self-assertion, the unscrupulous seizing upon all that can be grasped, and the tenacious holding of all that can be kept. It is implied that this is the key to all animate progress, and it is transferred, unmodified, to the human sphere. Huxley said, 'For his successful progress, throughout the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger; his exceptional physical organization; his cunning, his sociability, his curiosity, and his imitativeness; his ruthless and ferocious destructiveness when his anger is roused by opposition.'[3] Again, 'Cosmic nature is no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature.' 'The cosmos works through the lower nature of man, not for righteousness, but against it.'[4] We know how sincerely he faced his own interpretation of the cosmic process. He said, 'Let us understand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it.'[5]

Unfortunately the general trend of naturalistic thought has been that we are committed to the cosmic process, as thus understood, with its fundamental assumption that might is right, and self-assertion the supreme virtue. We thus get, as one direct result, the widespread conviction that all human progress depends, in the last resort, on warfare, and that war is ‘ natural ’ to man. It has made him what he is, it is necessary as the school of virtue, and will not and cannot be eradicated from human society. Huxley certainly chose the better part, and had a truer conception of the conditions of social stability and progress. His position was ethically sound, but biologically unsound. It is a philosophical absurdity to suppose that the consummation of the evolutionary process could be achieved by a complete reversal of its main directive principle at the most critical stage of its advance. It is a religious impossibility that the purposes of the Creator, operating in any part or period of His work, should be at variance with those operating in any other part or time. His purposes are self-consistent and loving all through.

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[1] Otto, *Naturalistiche und Religiöse Weltansicht*, p. 102. English trans., pp. 133–4.

[2] Op. cit., p. 102. English trans., p. 134.

[3] Huxley, *Essays, Evolution and Ethics.* [4] Op. cit. [5] Op. cit.

We have already said enough to show that natural selection is a purely subsidiary principle in evolution, resulting in the sifting out of less fit organisms. We have to ask what is the true criterion of fitness. Has nature her preferences, and what is the secret, not of survival, but of progress ? The answer is found in a set of facts that were for a long time ignored, and even now have not been granted the premier rank which is rightly theirs. The positive principle, which is far more important than that of natural selection, is the principle of co-operative effort, which holds good throughout the entire realms of organisms, from the highest to the lowest. ‘ The progress, beauty, and success of organisms have always been won, and will continue to be won, by co-operative purpose and endeavour. Those creatures which choose the selfish life, though they may cling hard to existence, and may long evade their fate, will certainly in the end be eliminated.'[1] 'The value and success of any organism or any species is to be estimated according to its capacity for co-operative *work*, self-restraint in all matters connected with food and reproduction, refusal to exploit other organisms for selfish purposes, rejection of slothful and easy-going ways of living, and obedience to the Golden Rule of reciprocity, in the determination not to get all that is possible for nothing, but always to give a little more than is received.'[2] Not self-assertion, but self-restraint and social solidarity have been the highest factors of biological progress ; and in the cosmic process there are the foreshadowings of morality and love, far below the level of human life. There is no 'biological necessity' for war in human society, nor for the dominance of selfish interests in any department of human life. It is a complete misreading of primitive society to regard it as fundamentally warlike. The most primitive races to-day are the most peaceful. War is mainly a terrible by-product of what we call civilization. It is a defiance of the providential order, which has, after all, decreed that 'the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.'

EVOLUTION AND THE MORAL LIFE

In ethics generally the evolutionary philosophy of writers like Herbert Spencer has had considerable influence, and some attention should be given to this. God's providential guidance of mankind has been to a great extent through the conscience of the individual ; and whatever impairs the authority of conscience is fatally injurious to human life. But evolutionary naturalism makes conscience itself the product of mechanical processes. We may rightly speak of a development of the moral life, and of the education of the conscience ; but conscience is no more a product of any evolutionary process than is mind. Nothing could be more futile than Herbert Spencer's scheme. ' Experiences of utility,' which are elements of conscious spiritual activity, produce ' corresponding nervous modifications,' which are physical entities, and these in turn ' have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition ' ! The amazing thing is that no less a person than Sir Arthur Keith is still repeating similar statements. Equally impossible is Spencer's derivation of altruism from egoism. There is no need further to dwell upon these general questions ; but it is advisable to touch upon the serious difficulties that have arisen in connexion with the Christian conceptions of sin and of the Fall of man.

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[1] *London Quarterly Review*, 'A New Outlook in Biology,' October 1923.

[2] Op. cit.

At the first glance, evolution may seem to do away with sin altogether. Man has, presumably, emerged from a purely animal condition to the status of self-conscious personality. In this we see, so far, nothing but gain. His task is now so to control and use the physical conditions of his life as to secure the highest development of character. Here the moral problem comes in at once. Man, as spiritual, is free ; and he may or may not choose to exert all his will to achieve whatever is best in the realm of character. Man as personal comes into direct contact with a personal God, whose call is a constant constraint against the lower choice, and a constant allurement towards the higher. To ignore or resist this call is to refuse the path of life, and is sin. The moment self-consciousness comes in, there is the knowledge of good and evil, and the possibility of evil. We must never forget that the *possibility* of evil is not evil ; but, unfortunately, in all human history there has been a very imperfect response to the divine call, and so the actuality of sin, in many degrees. It seems to me that, as thus stated, there is no real contradiction between the evolutionary theory in general and the Christian doctrine of the Fall. In the story of Genesis we have the conditions and factors of man's trial and moral failure set out with complete fidelity ; and they are reproduced in the history of every man that is born into the world.

The assumption made in so many interpretations of the Genesis story is that our first parents fell from a state of moral perfection into a state of sin. No such thing is to be found there. ' This assumption,' Driver says, ' is opposed to everything that we know of the methods of God's providence.' Our first parents fell into sin from a state of non-moral innocence. How could they sin, or even be tempted, *before* they had any knowledge of good and evil ? The command itself, not to eat of the tree, presupposes a moral relation to God, and so already the knowledge of good and evil. Besides, if the Tree of Life was not forbidden, how is it they had not already eaten of it ? What we are entitled to see in the story is an attempt to set forth, in vividly pictorial form, the fact that with the possession of reason and conscience there came the power of choice, that the choice was wrongly made, and so inevitably cut off those who made it from realizing the perfect life God had destined for them. So there arose the need for a new divine activity of redemption.

We have given to the Genesis story the title, ' The Fall of Man,' and to the evolutionary story the title, ' The Rise of Man,' and then stumble over the mere verbal contradiction. The stories are one, and set forth equally the failure of man to respond to the divine call and guidance, and to make the proper use of the great gifts with which he has been endowed. There is a rise in status, and a fall from the realization of the opportunities which that higher status brought with it. All human history is the story of the divine Providence leading men to salvation.

If the evolution theory has created temporary difficulties for Christian theology, it has also thrown illuminating side-lights on some of its great principles. Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* is still well worth reading. The title is more to be criticized than the work itself, which is an early attempt to gather in the spiritual gains of the biological theory. If Drummond had spoken of ' The Spiritual Law in the Natural World,' he would perhaps have been nearer the mark, and he may have meant this, for, as he himself says, the spiritual really comes first in the divine order, and not the material.

In the lower realms of nature, evolutionary study has brought out the significant facts of degeneration and retribution, which are analogous to the facts of sin and its penalties in human life. If an organism follows easy and selfish paths, and fails to give as it receives, then deterioration sets in, and it becomes a parasite. The result is that it loses every semblance of beauty, loses all its higher powers and functions, becomes very little more than a mouth and stomach, and is generally a source of weakness and disease in the organisms which it makes its prey. This is the nemesis which overtakes every creature which is unfaithful to its own special opportunities and possibilities. On the other hand, the constant effort to conquer difficulties and to occupy higher spheres has led to the conquest of the earth by the creatures that moved up out of the sea. These have peopled the earth with its rich variety of living creatures, and given us the birds that have even conquered the realm of the air.

Another related fact is also to be noted, namely that in nature there is no repentance. The set of evolution is irrevocable. Whatever way an organism chooses to go, on that way it must continue. If that way is downhill, there is no rising again. The parasite has doomed itself to ultimate extinction ; for nature cannot tolerate too long those that betray her. We see a very similar fact in human life, in that sin inevitably leads to more sin. It involves a sort of spiritual paralysis from which the unaided effort of the sinner can never release him. And just as the parasite seems to do well enough, for the time, at its own degraded level, so men may get into a state of stupid satisfaction with their own almost bestial condition. Man is just as helpless to save himself as the lower creatures ; but ‘ where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly : that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

VI

THE MIRACULOUS

From the consideration of the general questions as to the nature of God and of His relations to the created order, we turn to the more special problems of Providence. Here at once we have to take up the subject of the miraculous, and to inquire what place, if any, it has in God's guidance of human life. This is a subject of much complexity, partly because the terms used bear different shades of meaning, but still more because what is good evidence to a theist may be no evidence at all to an agnostic ; it is a question of the general outlook.

Christian theology accepts a personal God, Father and Creator, who has made the world for spiritual ends, whose fixed laws are all modes of His activity within the material of which it is composed. He has created also spiritual individuals whose perfecting in likeness to Himself is His highest aim. It goes without saying that the personal divine guidance of such individual persons is the only conceivable condition of their education and perfection. But now all the difficulties connected with the physical conditions of finite persons come in. God's Providence must operate at least in part through the general physical conditions of human life. Whatever influence He may directly exert on their minds will also have definite results in the physical world, as, for instance, on their bodies. It is inevitable that the physical and the spiritual will always be involved together. Are we now to say that God's guidance, as far as man's outer world is concerned, will be always and only quasi-personal, through the laws of matter, so that men's bodies are, from the point of view of nature, things, and nothing more? Or can God, and does He, ever take any special action within the physical sphere for the succour of any particular persons? If so, we have something we call miraculous. Again, it is plain that such activity might keep so much within the scope of material laws that it could never be *proved* to be miraculous.

In that case there would be nothing that would clash with science; there would be just that kind of event which it takes no account of, and would have no right to deny. It would be a matter of interpretation in private experience. But sometimes the special action has been believed to produce results in the material world that are quite contrary to scientific expectation and to general experience. If these actually happened, God has been departing, so to say, from His usual routine. Has theology, from the point of view of God's character, any proper ground for saying that God could, but never would, do so? And has science, with its world of generalized entities and uniformities, any right to say that such things are impossible? If they are possible and actual, do they in any way stultify science? In my belief, certainly not. And the position I should support is, that as the divine guidance of persons is not quasi-personal, but fully personal, it will issue in particular aid and succour of individuals, chiefly within the regular limits of physical law, but may, and sometimes does, go far beyond this, in what, for science, is contravention of that law. The fact is, personal activity cannot possibly be tied down to any routine of any sort, however necessary that may be for life as a whole. Stability of character and oneness of purpose will regularize action in most of its forms, but will not reduce it to the automatic uniformity of a machine. I once heard a man whose business depended for its success upon an almost meticulous care for order and regularity say that he did not hesitate to break any rule, if the occasion required it. The activity of a perfect person will be both restrained and free, restrained from all caprice, but free for all the highest purposes of its own goodness. So it is wise to keep open the door, even in this world of marvellous orderliness, for the unprecedented which goes outside all ordinary rules.

There are signs of a tendency to introduce a new sort of determinism into the divine nature itself, as if for God Himself there could never be more than one way open. This is, in any case, extremely doubtful, and, in reference to His dealings with finite persons, practically impossible. If freedom is anything real for finite persons, God meets them, moment by moment, on the level of their freedom ; and His guidance is adjusted to their needs. The stable element is God's own character ; but there may be many surprises in His modes of action. If we say, ' given His character, His action is necessarily determined,' we seem to be introducing into the realm of spirit that mechanical sort of interpretation which Streeter calls ' mechanomorphism.'

One difficulty in the acceptance of the miraculous is the utter impossibility of imagining the mode of its working ; but this difficulty belongs to the whole set of questions about the relation of mind to matter. Mind is not spatially ' in ' matter, nor can it ' touch ' it at any point ; yet nothing is more certain than that mind controls matter. ' My ' mind controls ' my ' body ; yet it is not ' in ' my brain ; and I cannot even dimly imagine *how* the control is effected. Again, my mind has all sorts of contact with other finite minds. Reading Shakespeare, my mind makes contact with his in a vital and effective way. ' He, being dead, yet speaketh.' Time and space are nothing here. In the realm of religious experience we hold the belief that the divine Mind, which is at least as unitary and conscious a spiritual entity as our minds, does directly make contact with us, though not through any medium of the senses or the brain-cells of which we are conscious. For religious philosophy also, the reality of the divine personal control of all things material is fundamental. Here the difficulties are all of the same order ; and it does not seem that the problem of the contact of the divine Mind with finite minds and with material things is, in principle, any different from that of the contact of finite minds with one another and with material things.

Ordinary people open doors, and move about, and talk to one another, blissfully unaware of the mysteries in the heart of everyday experience. Little children kneel in prayer ; and they believe God hears them. When they grow up, they still pray ; their prayer is the most precious privilege of their lives. Without it, they would be bereft indeed. If they are being deceived, it is by Reality Itself. We do not think they are deceived ; and we must take account of what prayer means for the people who pray. They believe, not merely that they are adjusting their minds to the general purposes and will of God, which, of course, they are doing ; but that God meets their needs by action of His own, there and then efficacious. They believe, not that by prayer they are schooling themselves to accept the inevitable, the fixed and predestined order of events ; but that God is free to influence the minds of men and the material order for the good of His children. There is plenty of evidence that this does actually happen ; and there are good grounds for accepting the reasonableness of the faith ; and, if so, for belief in divine activity that is providential and may be miraculous. The difficulty of understanding *how* God works is the defect of our ignorance ; it constitutes no positive obstacle for religious experience. If science says it cannot deal with any such order of facts, that is a legitimate position ; they are excluded by all the terms and definitions of science. But if science goes on to say that such personal activity of a Living God is excluded from human experience by natural law, it is pronouncing dogmatically on matters obviously outside its province.

Science deliberately excludes from its purview all that is not automatic, and therefore has no jurisdiction over that higher Reality which, being personal, may work out its purposes by means of mechanism, but whose care of individuals cannot be confined to any type of mechanism, cosmic or otherwise.

After this attempt at a general statement, some of these points will be taken up, at the risk of a certain amount of repetition.

In parenthesis, it may be remarked that, as respects the mode of God's working, there is an analogy between miracles and the mutations which we found to be so critical in evolutionary theory. A mutation is the evidence of transcendent action in the physical order, as a miracle is the evidence of transcendent action in the personal order. In the first case, as the mutation is a brute fact in the physical order, it is simply accepted by science, however inexplicable : its evidence is itself. In the second case, the fact being primarily one of personal experience, its evidence is for those who can read it aright. It is not surprising that those who do not believe in a personal God will deny it outright. There are none so blind as those who will not see.

When first the importance of mutations was realized, attention was fixed on those of large amount. It was seen that if a big jump in the evolutionary series could be at once fixed by heredity, the whole process of evolution might be very much speeded up ; and this was a very welcome conclusion. But very soon scientific opinion moved to the position that the main line of progress was not by way of very large mutations, but of very small ones, thus returning very nearly to Darwin's view. We might perhaps compare the very small mutations to those special providences which, though never conspicuous, are supremely important for personal guidance, and the larger, more spectacular mutations, to miracles proper. It is obvious that we could bring into this comparison the Incarnation, the greatest miracle of all.[1]

The divine activity at work in the physical order is manifested more eminently in the providential order. The personal Mind, Will, and Love are hidden within the physical order, so that it may be regarded as a sort of machine. In Providence they are more directly active, and are open to those who make use of their spiritual faculties. Here the Father, through nature, is working out the good of His children. His activity may, and does, for the most part run upon ordinary lines, and use ordinary means. But Providence, being necessarily individual, may sometimes be recognized with special directness in some particular situation, and may sometimes use extraordinary means ; and in this case we have a miracle. A miracle is usually regarded as an act of God that definitely contravenes the natural order. Now, if the order of nature is something mechanically fixed, and running of itself, it cannot be changed in any way, and a miracle is impossible. Therefore we must state the case differently, as Augustine did, long ago. He said, ' How can that be contrary to nature that takes place by the will of God, seeing that the will of the Almighty Creator is the true nature of every created thing ? So that miracle is not contrary to nature, but only to what is known of nature.'[2]

[1] Cf. *The Lord of Life*, p. 179. [2] See Platt, *Miracles*, pp. 62–3.

God is acting for special purposes that have to do with persons, often by exceptional means, and often through exceptional men. Hogg puts the matter in this way : ' " Special providences " render self-evident for us the grace and wisdom of God ; miracles or preternatural " special providences " render self-evident His infinitude as well. Events which we apprehend as miraculous or supernatural are, therefore, acts of God in a sense that is altogether pre-eminent.'[1] He compares the supernatural to the beautiful. Both are a matter of intuitive apprehension. ' Perhaps one may say that a " special providence " is what corresponds, in the realm of events, to the beautiful in nature, and that a miracle is what corresponds, in the realm of events, to the sublime in nature.'[2] Here we cannot draw hard and fast lines. A special providence will not, for the most part, involve the preternatural, but sometimes it may. Take as an example the crossing of the Jordan by the Hebrews, on their entry into the Promised Land. We are told that this took place at a time when the river was in flood, and therefore more difficult to cross. Foster Kent says that the Jordan frequently changes its course ; and at some points the river undermines its clay banks, so that a landslide takes place, and its flow is temporarily dammed up, leaving the bed below practically dry. The floods actually cause the stoppage of the river. A Moslem army in retreat was once saved from destruction by an occurrence of this sort. We are expressly told in Joshua that the crossing by the Hebrews took place in a time of flood, and that the waters were dammed up at a point far up the river. Here we have a natural explanation of a rare and unique occurrence ; but we have also to deal with the fact that it coincided with a special crisis in the history of God's people. We may rightly regard it as more than a happy accident, indeed as a very impressive instance of divine guidance, much more striking and far-reaching in results than, say, the turning of water into wine at Cana.

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[1] Hogg, *Redemption From This World*, p. 197. [2] Op. cit., pp. 199, 200.

There is a rather strange tendency in some recent discussions almost to kill the miraculous by kindness. It is shown how little ideas of natural law can be used to bar out the actuality of any event whatever, be it even so extraordinary as a resurrection from the dead. Philosophy now refuses to say that miracles are impossible. At the same time, we are told that the new idea of the elasticity of natural law, or its possible extension in all sorts of new directions, makes it impossible for us to say of any event at all that actually occurs that it may not be natural. Thus alleged miracles cannot be proved, and, supposing there were any, they would have no evidential value ; they might just as well not happen at all. Even the Incarnation is spoken of as 'an entirely natural process.' We cannot think that this sort of argument is likely to be helpful.

The modernist procedure with regard to miracles seems to run on some such lines as these. The Incarnation, which is, if anything, surely a unique and wonderful intervention of the transcendent God, is set down as something natural, which must mean, evolved out of the given elements of nature. The Incarnation being no miracle,[1] it cannot be supposed that any events connected with the life of the Incarnate

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[1] It is remembered that Illingworth (*Divine Immanence*, Chap. iv) speaks of the Incarnation as ' natural ' to God, as natural as to create man ; and regards it as an event which cannot be called miraculous, because it is unique, stupendous, standing in a class by itself. But for him it is ' no mere event in the ordinary line of human evolution, but the coming of One from a transcendent sphere ' (Illingworth, *Divine Transcendence*, p. 8). Moreover, it carries with it a whole train of what, for Illingworth, are miracles in the ordinary meaning of the term. Thus the Incarnation is not a miracle because it is higher than a miracle. This is a position quite at variance from that criticized above, though some of the same phrases are employed.

Son were miracles ; therefore they did not happen in the way the Gospels describe them, if they happened at all. Miracle disappears *in toto*, and we are left without any transcendent action of God in human affairs. Special providence goes, and with it, any satisfying theory of prayer. We have nothing left in touch with human life except the immanent God. His transcendence is not formally denied, but it is made utterly ineffective. We have the universe, with God as personal (in brackets) outside it. To borrow a phrase of Dr. Cairns, I would put the matter thus, that the sort of faith I have rebels against this entire scheme.

Miracle is not so much a breach of natural law as an event due to divine action of another order from that which can be codified by science. In such a case, science should simply accept the fact, and recognize that it is beyond her province to account for it. That may sound extreme heresy ; but it is less confusing ultimately than denying the fact outright. The principle of a rigid uniformity of nature, regarded as a closed system, is, in fact, no more than a strong expectation based on a metaphysical assumption.[1] That assumption works very well for the most part, but it will not carry all the facts in a world which has in it moral and spiritual factors, as well as physical ones. Science has now very much modified its view of law as fixed, and now regards it rather as a formula descriptive of nature's behaviour or routine. Whenever exceptional facts appear, they are, if possible, taken up into some new and wider formula, as in the case of the theories of relativity. But, however comprehensive the formula, it will never take in miracles, at least in their full completeness, as personal acts.

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[1] It may be more correct to say that the ' closed system ' is a mere invention of science. It is, for science, all-sufficing, because the terms used are all defined in terms of one another. In that fine little book *Gallio*, Sullivan says, at the close, ' Science forms a closed system simply because it employs the device of cyclic definition. The teachings of science, so far as the spiritual problems of men are concerned, need no longer be regarded as stultifying : they are merely irrelevant.'

Turning from the idea of law to that of causation, we have to accept the order of things which we call nature as apparently self-sufficient. The *ground* of the whole system is, for theism, creative activity ; but, even so, the system itself is a growing one, if such an epithet is allowable. There are constantly appearing new elements, emergents, mutations ; and science is constantly enlarging its borders to include them and their effects. From the point of view of causation, what is claimed is, if I rightly follow the argument, that every new emergent in the field of nature (including human experience) may be, for anything we know, an evolution of what was already latent or provided for in the system from the beginning. Thus, however striking any new event may be, we could never prove that it is not naturally caused ; and it is no proper evidence of special or immediate divine activity. This is just another way of putting the pre-formation theory.

It results that neither from the view of law nor of causation, as scientific conceptions, could any miracle ever be proved. This conclusion might be accepted purely from the point of view of science ; but what is really meant is, that by such reasonings miracles are definitely disproved. All evidence that they have actually occurred is somehow mistaken. So it is stated generally that no evidence can ever prove the supernatural, or that testimony cannot reach to divine agency.

The desire to maintain a valid meaning and an open space for the miraculous is by no means due to a narrow traditionalism which cannot discard effete points of view or make terms with new facts. It is rather a desire to be faithful to the implications of the creative evolutionary activity, which is marked by continuous increase in the range of control of mind over matter. Scientists to-day are attempting, in all hopefulness, to unlock the immense energies of the atom, and to produce living matter from non-living. If their efforts are ever successful, we shall have reached practically complete human transcendent control of matter ; and this will be an intellectual achievement for practical ends, a penetration of the mechanical secrets of the universe. Even so, man will not have got any nearer to the ultimate cause and origin of things ; he will only be following more closely the creative methods, and winning a transcendence destined for him. 'The perfected universe would be one in which there was no matter not mastered by intensity of life, none that was not the medium of expression, conscious, willed, and so personal.'[1]

This great advance in material dominance would still leave the questions of Providence and miracle much where they are to-day ; except that it would make it still more reasonable to believe that, where man could do so much, God could do still more. For the belief in miracle is not merely a claim for human and divine dominance of matter, it is the belief that the highest causal efficacy is in terms of spiritual purpose. It is for those who love that God causes all things to work together for good. If love moves the stars and controls the atom, it is that they may serve the purposes of love ; and love is always particular and personal. 'If Christ ever came to His disciples walking on the water, it was because love demanded it.'[2]

THEISTIC DENIAL OF THE MIRACULOUS

What we are entitled to say is that, if on general grounds theism is accepted, with its fundamental belief in a personal God, the possibility of miracles is at least

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[1] A. Clutton-Brock, in *The Spirit*, p. 343.

[2] A. C. Turner, in *Concerning Prayer*, p. 402.

suggested. We are then led to the inquiry as to whether the idea of a personal God properly involves providential action in which miracles have a place. We find that opposite sides are taken by theists, and by many to-day miracles are rejected outright, not, perhaps, because of any reduced conception of God, but by the expedient of bringing under the idea of nature everything actual that has at any time been deemed to be miraculous.

In the argument outlined above—which in the main has in view Tennant's *Miracle and its Philosophical Presuppositions*—miracle is again and again declared to be a possible and reasonable theory, for science, for psychology, and for philosophy, only to be rejected. Here one has the impression that laws of nature are really treated all along as agents ; whilst the attribution of all new developments, such as the emergence of life and mind, simply to nature, looks rather like a conjurer's trick. But what tends to make the whole argument merely academic is that it never once takes up the implications of personality as fundamental to the whole problem. The right procedure, surely, is to consider the evidences of the divine guidance in regard to particular acts believed to have a private and personal significance in the first place, though they may well be evidential to others also.

Science builds up a skeleton framework outlining the ordinary routine of events in nature ; the individual as such it is nowhere concerned with. But providence and miracle are, for theism, happenings of personal and individual significance especially. Science, confessedly, leaves out of its survey everything individual. Now this means that it leaves out of account a vast number of trifling oddments that do not matter, but that it also leaves out the central things of all. It has to do with products. It takes nature as given, apart from the Creator, and it deals with phenomena altogether in abstraction from finite persons. In particular, the scientist always forgets that he is an important factor in his own work. But persons are the ultimate reals and the only agents. Each one has an absolute value and a unique experience. Granted that nature is the medium of God's fellowship with His children, her general laws cannot possibly express the particular message He has for each child, or sum up the special acts of His guardian care. A miracle might be a special act in a special emergency, as when a mother snatches her child out of the fire. If we argue that even such an act was precisely included in the original conformation of the cosmos, we are including the very particulars which science, as such, expressly excludes. This all looks like pantheistic theology and pseudo-scientific science. Rather, we maintain that the facts of the *otherness* of the world and God, and of God's activity *upon* the world, beliefs 'distinctive of theism and essential to it,' open the way for miracle as well as special providence. We would agree with Tennant, that 'there is no scientific impediment to the pious supposition that more things may be wrought by prayer than this world dreams of, nor to belief in what are called "particular providences" and "personal messages"; though I am prepared to admit that the need here arises for "trying" the spirits, else we open the floodgates of superstition and "enthusiasm."'[1]

There is a point that may be taken up in reference to the biblical testimony to the miraculous. It is frequently stated that in the land and age of the New Testament writers there was no idea at all of the uniformity of nature, or of fixed laws as we know them. Anything might happen; and anything unusual was put down to a supernatural agent. Thus, 'so long as the uniformity of nature is unrecognized, miracles tend to occur; but when that uniformity is recognized, miracles tend to become rare.'[1] The belief in miracles, if this is a completely adequate statement, will soon die a natural death.

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[1] *Modern Churchman*, vol. xiv., p. 319.

To say that the men of our Lord's time had little or no idea of an ordered world is simply an error. The very word 'cosmos,' which we use so much, was used then, in essentially the same sense in which we use it to-day. We have to go no further than the first chapter of the Bible to recognize this. Though the science of Genesis is antiquated, it presented an ordered universe. To quote Driver's words, 'The narrative of the Creation sets forth, in a series of dignified and impressive pictures, the sovereignty of God ; His priority to, and separation from, all finite, material nature, His purpose to constitute an ordered cosmos, and gradually to adapt the earth to become the habitation of living beings ; and His endowment of man with the peculiar, unique possession of self-conscious reason, in virtue of which he becomes capable of intellectual and moral life, and is even able to know and hold communion with his Maker.'[2]

In our Lord's time, Greek thought was thoroughly familiar to the Eastern world. Plato had taught that divine goodness was the motive of Creation, and its guiding principle eternal reason. Aristotle worked out the first complete teleological theory of the universe and man as the graded creative work of God upon formless matter. The Alexandrian-Jewish teacher Philo attempted a complete interpretation of the Old Testament in the terms of Greek philosophy. He worked very largely by means of the conception of the Logos, one of the central terms of the Stoic philosophy, which, for him, is the activity of the divine thought expressed in existing things. It is 'the supreme unity of the primitive forms of the created world.' But the Jews had already a term which covered the same ground, and more. For them the divine wisdom is 'the quality in virtue of which God knows and plans and purposes all things, possessing as He does perfect comprehension of all creatures and their capacities, and perfectly adapting the best means for the accomplishment of the highest and best possible ends.'[1] Here 'Hebraism can triumph over Hellenism on its own chosen ground, and there is nothing in Plato to surpass the conception of celestial wisdom which dawns upon some of the writers of the Old Testament.'[2] In the Wisdom of Solomon we read, 'Wisdom is more mobile than any motion; yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness.' 'She reacheth from one end of the world to the other, with full strength, and ordereth all things graciously.' 'She, being one, hath power to do all things; And remaining in herself, reneweth all things: And from generation to generation passing into holy souls She maketh men friends of God and prophets.'[3]

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[1] Op. cit., p. 384.

[2] Driver, *Genesis*, p. lxx.

The Jewish term 'Wisdom' is much richer in meaning than 'Logos,' whose scope is purely intellectual. Wisdom includes the meaning of reason, with moral and religious references as well. Thus for Jewish philosophy the problems of Creation are always taken in the closest connexion with human life. Nature is practically never looked at apart from man. Through nature, God is always dealing with man. It is certainly true that there is very little conception of what we call 'secondary causes.' God is always there, on the spot, acting directly. Now, this is the deeper truth, and the ultimate fact. Secondary causes are just classifications of modes of the divine activity; and the inveterate tendency of modern thought is to treat them as if they were self-acting agents; and where these can be discerned, there is no further need to think of their ground. Finally, everything is assigned to secondary causes, and God is banished altogether.

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[1] Davison, in Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 343.

[2] Davison, *The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 7.

[3] *Wisdom of Solomon*, vii. 24, viii. 1, vii. 27.

We believe that the average man of our Lord's day had as firm a belief in established order as we have. Amongst the educated there was a great deal of fatalism —both Stoics and Epicureans were alike in this—and amongst the uneducated there was an uncritical credulity. There may be less fatalism to-day ; but all mechanistic systems look that way ; and the uncritical credulity is still widely spread. There is no special problem here ; things were very much the same then as now.

Setting aside for the moment the dictum that no evidence can establish the supernatural, we have on hand the special difficulty connected with the evidence for any historical fact whatever. There are those to-day who hold that ultimate spiritual truth is entirely independent of historical facts. Even if Christ never lived at all, there is saving power in the Christ-idea. I do not feel under any obligation to take up that question, only to say that I work from the conviction that the facts of history, and particularly of Christian history, are of vital importance. I believe that the men who had to do with Jesus were as competent to understand and record His words and acts as we ourselves would be, if we were transported into that age. I do not think that a committee of the Society for Psychical Research would get any nearer to the truth than His disciples did. We have plenty of indications that on every hand, amongst the people generally, and also amongst His intimate friends, there was not the least disposition to believe anything and everything. The people were ' astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power.' They said, ' Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works ? ' ' We never saw anything like this ! ' ' Though He had

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done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on Him.' We are told that His brethren did not believe in Him. Nothing is more certain than that the disciples did not expect His resurrection, in spite of all that they had witnessed of His power. But *after* the Resurrection, and the events that followed, as they reflected on the things they had seen and heard, in their fellowship with Him, in the light of all that was going on under their eyes, they realized that He must be divine ; He would not go into any other category. This is not to claim that everything set down in the Gospels is perfectly accurate. Some things, for instance, that the disciples thought were miracles may not have been ; but there can be no reasonable doubt that most of the events recorded as miracles happened just as they are recorded.

Personality and Miracle

The above remarks are really preliminary to a study of the question of miracle where it should properly begin, and that is in connexion with the life of Jesus Christ. However, before taking that up in detail, it is necessary once again to emphasize the fact that the study of miracle is essentially not so much a problem of law as of personality. In what follows reference may be made to Dr. Platt's little book on *Miracles*, which presents the Christian view in a way that could not be bettered. He says, ' It may be wisely held that " miracle " is more a problem of personality than of natural science. It is certainly in the personal life that we must look for miracle in the religious or Christian sense ; it is part of the interpretation of the facts of the immanence and transcendence of spirit in regard to matter. Something in man is clearly destined to perfect mastery over nature ; the perfect use, for the ends of his personality, of the forces denoted by the symbol " laws of nature " is the high calling of his nature ; the physical is to find its perfect sphere in service for the spiritual.'[1] D'Arcy also says : 'It might be reasonably argued, from a wide survey of human activity in its dealing with natural forces, that it belongs to their original constitution to be so subordinated, that they were made to be the servants of Spirit.'[2] It follows, then, that the higher the level of personality, the more likely we are to find evidences of control over all the powers of nature.

Platt says, 'If, as we have previously suggested, miracles are ultimately a problem of personality and its interpretation—a mode of communication by a personal spirit through unaccustomed uses to which it puts matter—miracle will usually be associated with the appearance and activities of great personalities, master spirits, through whom, and through the wonders by which they awake our attention, and aid our faith in the spiritual, we find our access to the higher powers of our own spirits in knowledge of and communion with God.'[3] If, then, we are to understand aright the nature of miracle, it will be as manifested most adequately in connexion with the supreme human person known to history, Jesus Christ.

We may take it as generally accepted that the contemporaries of Jesus believed that He wrought miracles, and that He himself believed that He had the power to perform them. The story of the Temptation could not have originated otherwise. It turns entirely on His consciousness that He possessed such powers. As the author of *Ecce Homo* said, in a passage often quoted, if the miracles did not happen, the credibility of the Gospel stories is completely destroyed, and Christ is left as mythical a figure as Hercules. The wisest plan is to study the miracles, as recorded, in their relation to the other elements of the Gospel accounts.

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[1] Platt, *Miracles*, p. 13.

[2] D'Arcy, *Christianity and the Supernatural*, p. 27.

[3] Platt, *Miracles*, p. 53.

There are some things that strike us at once, when we look at the work of Christ as a whole. There is a compelling *authority* in every region of experience, a clear insight into truth, a sure discernment of the very core of it, and a moral discernment that was absolute. There was the clear certainty of a call from God, of a work for all mankind, and of the means by which it was to be accomplished. The whole method was ethical and spiritual, and original in the highest degree ; and it was carried out with unswerving courage. It ran counter to all ordinary policy, and to the preconceptions of the Jews. In all His words and deeds, purity, love, and goodness shone with unwavering brightness. If we now turn to the Gospel miracles, they fit into this picture perfectly. They were never wrought as displays of power ; and when such were demanded, they were always refused ; they were acts of grace. Jesus healed the sick and fed the hungry because He was kind. He used powers not possessed by ordinary people in doing these things, but always because of some spiritual end to be served. This very fact led Him strictly to limit such activities, because they sometimes might lead to results the very opposite of what He intended. Of this restraint we read in *Ecce Homo*, ' It is a moral miracle superinduced upon a physical one. This repose in greatness makes him surely the most sublime image ever offered to the human imagination.'[1] No doubt there was in the miracles of healing an appeal that justified them. The mercy that cured people's bodies opened their hearts to the grace that would heal their souls. This is the function of Christian medical missions to-day, and it is of untold value.

Granted the wise and beneficent use of miracle, we have to consider the power displayed, and may proceed upon the hypothesis that this power is such as is to be expected in human personality when perfectly developed. To one in perfect fellowship with God there will be given an insight into the divine will that cannot err, and a faith that knows nothing of obstacles. 'It is that sharing in the divine will which gives our Lord in His human mind the knowledge that what He wills is the will of God, and it is this knowledge that what He wills is the will of God which is the parent of the faith that it shall be accomplished.'[1]

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[1] *Ecce Homo*, p. 45.

But can we believe that such faith could effect what are called 'nature-miracles'? I think we must try to look at the problem from what was certainly Christ's point of view. In passing, it should be said that to put down the healing of the sick and the mentally deranged merely to the power of suggestion is to distort the gospel testimony altogether. They were works of power, wrought by faith in answer to faith. Our Lord evidently ranked the forgiveness of sins as the highest exercise of His power. 'He seems to have thought of moving mountains as far simpler than converting Judas Iscariot or holding St. Peter firm in his faith.'[2] 'It is not beyond the bounds of probability to think of the One Perfect Man in His human development as sharing in the exercise of the divine power to an extent which we can hardly conceive from our own limited and halting experience.'[3]

We have been speaking of miracle in terms of perfected finite personality, and thus are in touch with one of the ultimate problems. If there could be a perfect human life we should expect to find in its history evidences of transcendent power over nature; but we have to ask whether such a person is possible at all, in the world as we know it. According to the theory of 'emergent deity,' human personality has been explained as the highest product of the evolutionary process up to the present. There is no reality anywhere outside this process; but it involves a *nisus* towards deity. On these lines Jesus might be explained as the ideal expression of the religious genius of the Jewish race. He, first of all beings, has achieved deity. This is not the place for discussing the general theory. It is enough somewhat dogmatically to say that this conception will not fit into any true scheme either of science or theology, and certainly does not accord with our Lord's own consciousness of His person and work, as set forth in the Gospels and interpreted in the rest of the New Testament. The Christian position is that the doctrine of the Incarnation alone meets the facts involved, and covers the whole ground, both from the point of view of philosophy and history. The general doctrine has been already dealt with; but something further may be added in relation to its historical aspects. Incarnation, properly understood, necessarily implies the transcendent action of God in human history. The Incarnate must be born somewhere at some time, and come into the ordinary conditions of human life. He must 'come down from heaven'; and that means something unique in His birth. He must be perfect man, and therefore sinless. He must have the 'power of an endless life,' and therefore will return, when His earthly life is lived and His earthly work completed, to the glory that for a while He laid aside. If the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is accepted, we have here miracle in its most impressive form. It is a means by which God reveals to us, in final and perfect form, His own nature and His eternal purpose for ours. It is the supreme manifestation of His grace, and, of course, of His Providence; for, if He gave us His own Son, how shall He not, with Him, also graciously give us all things?

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[1] Hodgson, *And Was Made Man*, p. 134.

[2] Op. cit., p. 139. [3] Op. cit., p. 138.

Now the supreme miracle of the Incarnation carries with it a series of included miracles, as recorded in the

Gospels—namely, the sinless life, the Virgin Birth, and the Resurrection. As to the Virgin Birth, there is no need to say more in this connexion than that it is perfectly congruous with all the requirements of the situation ; and this is generally admitted even by those who do not accept it. To acknowledge the sinlessness of our Lord and His resurrection from the dead is absolutely necessary to account for the fact that our Lord's disciples, convinced monotheists who never swerved from their faith in the one and only God, blessed for evermore, worshipped their Master as one with Him. The fact from which all their preaching and their witness started was that He who had been crucified in weakness had been raised in power. They had seen the risen Lord ; and in the power of His Spirit they founded His Church, which went on from victory to victory. In view of all this, it seems rather futile to say that no evidence can establish the supernatural. As a matter of plain fact, *this* evidence did produce in the minds of the first disciples an overwhelming conviction of the transcendent intervention of God in human affairs. It has remained good evidence to His people ever since. Naturally, the character of the evidence is different for us who have not experienced the events of the life and death and resurrection of the Lord. They are for us eminently believable, because the spiritual miracles which began at Pentecost have been constantly reproduced wherever there has been faith in the risen Master.

We may now perhaps estimate what truth there is in the often repeated statement that miracles, which once were the confirmation of the gospel, are now almost an encumbrance. If we believe that they were an essential element of the self-manifestation of Christ to His own generation and people, they *are* evidence, even now. If they had not taken place, He would not be what we believe Him to be. The emphasis may be different. We have the case well put by Athanasius; 'The evidential force of miracles is strictly dependent upon their character, not as supernatural, but as beneficent, restorative, regulating, creative, the work of Him who is the only true Lord God; they are, in short, the revelation of God, not the proof of revelation.'[1]

What, then, about the dictum, 'miracles do not happen'? Certainly we are not to expect that any one will ever appear who can exercise the power over nature which our Lord had. He was unique, and His works were unique.

Jesus said to His disciples, 'The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works shall ye do.' Now it would appear that these 'greater works' will belong mainly to the spiritual order.[2] These our Lord regarded as of much greater importance than physical miracles. They stand on a higher level. In the event, His people *were* able to do greater works than their Master ever could do in the days of His flesh. His own direct influence was strictly limited until His earthly work was completed; but after Pentecost it was released for the blessing of all mankind. Moreover, as Illingworth so well shows,[3] the physical miracles of Christ cast new light on the supreme control of God over all material things. They were not intended to continue as a constant factor in human experience; because the spiritual education of mankind is, for the most part, to be secured within the ordinary course of nature. But within that order God is continually at work, guiding all things in response to faith and prayer.

Let us also leave room in religious experience for the present activity of the Lord Christ Himself. He is still personally interested in His servants here on earth, and, in answer to prayer, He may intervene, ‘ healing as He did on earth, suddenly, unconditionally, and completely. Such things happen still, and before such happenings we can only bow and adore.’[1]

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[1] See Platt, *Miracles*, p. 44.

[2] Some would go much further than this. See Morrison, 'Natural Law and Miracles,' *Expository Times*, vol. xli., p. 160; and see p. 251.

[3] Illingworth, *Divine Immanence*, chap. v.

So, generally, faith, for ordinary people, in ordinary circumstances, has its response well within the bounds of nature’s routine, and is continually being justified by its results. But we must not exclude the possibility that in great crises, both for individuals and nations, faith may rise to exceptional demands, which receive exceptional answers. Again, as the whole matter is one of personality, we may recall the words above quoted from Platt about the ‘ great personalities, master spirits,’ through whose life and work God most plainly shows His providential grace in exceptional ways, and reminds us of His transcendence.

What is meant may be illustrated by two examples, and first that of Joan of Arc. There could not be a more signal instance of extraordinary providential intervention than is seen in her career and its results. She was uniquely endowed and uniquely guided ; in her victories and in her disasters she was alike supremely great. At the time of the relief of Orléans she was about eighteen years of age, without education or any experience of great affairs. She is an amazing character. She has a clear sense of a divine call, and knows exactly what she has to do, and how to do it. She sweeps away apparently insuperable obstacles, prevails against the lethargy of the King and his councillors, and awakens the dying spirit of France. She shows herself a born leader of men, and a master of the operations of armies in the field. Betrayed and forsaken, she is more than a match for all the learning and subtlety of the Catholic hierarchy ; and in the last great trial dies in triumphant faith. Mrs. Oliphant says, ‘She is altogether impossible from beginning to end of her, inexplicable, alone.’ Henri Martin says, ‘Nothing like her has ever happened in the history of the world.’ The Sieur de Laval, writing about her a few weeks after the deliverance of Orléans, said, ‘There seemed something wholly divine in her manner, to see her and to hear her.’ Taking her whole character and career together, her constant fellowship with the unseen, her insight into the future, along with all the other things referred to, there is something here that cannot be called other than miraculous. ‘It may be that God, making mock of the weakness of the strong and the folly of the wise, chose to save France by the hand of one who was almost a child, in order that when they compared the weakness of the instrument with the grandness of the result, mankind could no longer doubt that in this work of salvation they saw the action of a higher Power and the intervention of the Almighty.’[1]

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[1] Anson, in *Concerning Prayer*, p. 359.

The second example is that of a man of our own time, the Sàdhu Sundar Singh. Much has been written about him, and the story of his life is well known. Like Paul, he was ever a seeker after God, but was bitterly opposed to Christianity, and, like Paul, in a moment he was changed from an enemy into an eager disciple. In a crisis of his faith he had a vision of the Christ precisely similar to that of Paul, and was won to His allegiance. Again, like Paul, he ‘suffered the loss of all things,’ and narrowly escaped with his life from an attempt to poison him. He quickly made up his mind to adopt the life of a *sàdhu*, devoting himself to utter poverty and homelessness, as by that means he hoped best to commend his message and witness. For his special sphere he chose the difficult and hazardous work in Tibet, where the terrible climate and inveterate hostility of the people made every step perilous. Beside this, he did a great deal of work in India, and visited many foreign countries. The impression he made wherever he went was overwhelming. Thousands thronged about him just to see him. 'In every city he visited he left a trail of light behind him.' One comment was, 'nearer the Christ than any living man we have seen,' another that he was the first to show how the gospel of Jesus could be reflected in unchanged purity in an Indian soul. His preaching is very simple, and full of homely illustrations. He has 'unusual powers of penetrating through shams to realities.' He is full of humour, and a delightful guest. His singular power has behind it an experience of unparalleled suffering, and a great capacity for prayer. He lives in two worlds. His experience of providential care is extraordinary. Many times he has been rescued from great danger by the intervention, one cannot but believe, of angels. On one occasion he was attacked by a large body of men, and thought the end was come; but suddenly they left him. When they returned next morning, he told them he was ready to die; but he found the people were ready to worship him. They said that the evening before a host of shining ones had intervened to save him. He holds frequently conversations with angels, and walks with them in heavenly places, not in a trance, but in a waking state of heightened consciousness, just as Joan's visions were never in a trance. 'Shall we refuse him to-day the capacity for vision of the unseen, and for fellowship with his Lord, which we admit to another saint nineteen centuries ago?'

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[1] Denis, *The Mystery of Joan of Arc*, trans. Conan Doyle, p. 216.

I do not know of any witness to the living power of Christ, and the nearness of the unseen world, which can be compared to this, as made known in our own generation. It is, of course, exceptional, unique; but it is like a window into heaven. Here is one who can say to us, from an experience of the twentieth century, 'I have seen the Lord.' And, as with Paul, the signs have followed, in the spiritual victories won in the hearts of men. While such men are possible, the age of miracles is still, in a very real sense, not past, and will never pass.

VII

PROVIDENCE, SPECIAL AND GENERAL

In discussing the miraculous, we have already in part touched on the subject of 'special providence.' We have maintained that God's purpose in the creation of finite persons necessarily implies His care for them individually, and that this care involves activity on their behalf within the physical order. We have suggested that this activity, which comes under the term 'special providence,' usually keeps within the routine of nature, but may go outside it, in what we call miraculous intervention. We will now consider special providence more at length, to some extent going over the same ground.

The question is asked, 'Is Providence miraculous?'—that is, does it in any way contravene the order of nature, and involve the supernatural? Here something may be said about the meaning of the terms 'nature' and the 'supernatural.'

NATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL

In any purely scientific context, the word 'nature' usually includes the physical world, along with all animate life except man. If man is included, it is merely as a part of animate life. For naturalistic philosophy, man is wholly explained as a product of nature in this restricted meaning. His life is lived in a material body, which is part of the physical order, and subject to its laws. The *élan vital* has thrown him up, on the crest of its wave; but, as the wave subsides, he will vanish into nothingness, or what amounts to that. Here the higher is explained by the lower ; and the mind and spirit of man are merely evanescent forms of physical energy. For this system, God and finite personalities are of no account at all.

Man truly is part of nature ; but, instead of reducing man to the terms of a mechanical conception of nature, we ought to raise our conception of nature to include what is the true nature of man. Man is, first and foremost, a spiritual, self-conscious individual. He is spirit-body, to use an uncouth expression. In him the physical and spiritual are reciprocally conditioned ; but the spiritual and individual belongs to the higher level of reality, and is not to be explained away. Obviously 'nature,' when man, with all his higher characteristics acknowledged, is included, is a different thing altogether from a closed mechanical system. There *is* a mechanical system ; but man has within it a unique position. He is in it, and yet transcends it. He is its servant, and at the same time, to a great extent, its master. He can manipulate its laws for his own ends. Man being what he is, the only ultimate explanation of physical nature is, that it is the sphere in which the Father of spirits is educating him and communicating with him. To think of nature as a closed system which excludes the personal action of God, and reduces man to an automaton, is to miss altogether the *raison d'être* of physical nature. In the true view, its laws are there expressly for the service of Providence. For instance, we are not to think of prayer as meeting insuperable obstacles the moment it touches on anything that has to do with the material order. On the contrary, it is just that spiritual activity which puts the individual into direct contact with the will of Him who constituted that order for the sake of the individual. It is just when the soul and God are in conscious fellowship that the material order is capable of functioning most adequately, God who gives and guides being then able to do all He purposes for those who are waiting to receive and to be led.

The term ‘ supernatural ’ can take a variety of meanings, including : (*a*) miracles, regarded as acts interfering with or violating the natural order, (*b*) a divine guidance which, without apparently interfering with the natural order, can and does operate, out of sight, for the blessing of individuals, and (*c*) the divine activity which lies behind and maintains the general system of nature.

The danger here is of setting up a false opposition between nature and the supernatural ; for, whilst purely physical nature may, for science, be regarded as a closed system of mechanical relations, for theism it has a supernatural ground. Theism accepts all the genuine facts of science, but puts them into a new setting. On the other hand, science has no legitimate quarrel with theism. That only arises when science claims to interpret Reality by means of its own data alone. ‘ The universe reveals itself as a whole, physical in its objective measurable aspects, spiritual in the manner of its continued and purposive upholding and energizing by God. Nature is the orderly guise of the ultimate spiritual Causality, and events are then “ natural ” in the mode of their occurrence, and “ supernatural ” in that they all alike rest on that creative and quickening Good Will in which all things literally consist.’[1]

Here, evidently, the term ‘ nature ’ is used in its lower, restricted meaning, and the term ‘ supernatural ’ in the third sense indicated above. Taken thus, the statement is clear and adequate ; but we want also to make room for the supernatural as including personal divine guidance of individuals. This belongs to the higher meanings of the term, thus corresponding to the higher meaning of the term ‘ nature.’ We should therefore say that within the realm of nature in its higher meaning, there is the operation of the supernatural in its higher meaning, and this is ‘ special providence.’

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[1] Simpson, *The Spiritual Interpretation of Nature*, p. 248.

The laws which science has tabulated have to do with supposed identical entities. Presumably, every electron is equivalent to every other electron, for the purposes of scientific formulation. For chemistry, every atom of hydrogen is like every other atom of hydrogen. For biology, every sheep is like every other sheep. In the last case, it is known that this is not really accurate ; but it is sufficiently so for the purposes of the science. This postulate works well enough in the lower realms of nature ; but when you get to persons, nothing short of individual guidance will meet the case ; and we must realize that God's action here will have greater freedom and elasticity. It will never be unreasonable or capricious, but will be more varied, and may escape all our powers of formulation. Here the immanent passes into the transcendent. In this connexion the remarks of W. N. Clarke are relevant : ‘ All action of God is natural to God as being in accordance with His nature, and also as being part of some rational system of action. Even to us, all action of God would appear rational, if we had the means of understanding it aright. In its common use, the word “ supernatural ” denotes all activity of God outside the order that we know ; and it should be distinctly understood that such activity is in a true sense natural, being normal, rational, and intelligible. God is one, and His action is equally normal to Him, whether it falls within the region of what we call nature or not. It is the extraordinariness of what is commonly called the supernatural that marks it as peculiar in this world, rather than any inherent difference between it and other activity of God.'[1] Here the term 'supernatural' seems to be used to cover the first two meanings named above.

Our argument is that as persons are individuals, each one of whom must be treated *as* an individual, it is not to be expected that any formulation of the ways of God's working, generalized into laws by abstracting always from the individuals to which they apply, would cover nearly all the facts involved ; in fact, all the most interesting and vital elements would be left out. This is not in any way to discredit science ; for its chosen realm is that not of individual entities as such, but of typical representative entities. When we look at the scheme of science we get the idea of a perfectly orderly system, the parts of which are themselves orderly systems. We have a framework ; but how it affects individuals, especially persons, we do not know merely by inspecting the framework. The universe, as given for science, appears to run itself as a machine, with almost no regard to individuals at all. Finally, God Himself is 'supposed only to have made a system of things in general, and to be concerned only with the maintenance of general laws.' Bowne calls this the fallacy of the universal. He says, 'There is no system of things in general, or of unrelated general laws. There is only the actual system of reality ; and the divine thought and activity which produce this actual system must be as manifold and special as the facts themselves.'[2] The divine activity is particular before it is general. This applies in the fullest way to God's dealings with persons. Thus special providence is the first reality. What we designate general providence is the view we get by classifying God's ways of dealing with similar cases. What is usually *called* special providence refers to cases in which we recognize the divine action in a more vivid way than in others where it is equally active.

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[1] Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 133.

[2] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 243.

Hogg, in his *Redemption From This World*, puts the matter thus : ' Facts are concrete or individual, and no possible number of rules can be adequate to the concrete individuality of the facts.' ' No event or action can take place which is not due to a particular agent possessing particular characteristics, and which does not occur under particular conditions, at a particular time, in a particular place, and with particular results.' That is to say, there is a great deal in every actual event that cannot be accounted for by general rules. God's activity encompasses and is adequate to the whole complexity of each particular happening, and the special needs of each individual person. ' Each new event He must decree on the individual merits of the situation out of which it springs. God lives and acts along with us in the immediate present. He is preserved from the finitude which location in *time* imposes on us by being more on the spot, not less on the spot than we are.'[1]

General and Special Providence

In relation to persons this means guidance all the way, at every point, in view of their special needs. Thus a religious man will believe in the guidance of God in every situation of life. In a vast number of events this guidance will be carried out in the midst of a routine which attracts no particular attention ; ' but now and again there occur events, the perfectly unique appropriateness of which to the peculiar needs of some individual situation seems to leap to the eye.'[2] Hogg distinguishes general from special providence as follows : ' Religion has its own name for events which we seem able to understand in this intuitive or individual manner. It calls them "special providences." "General Providence" is a name for the broad purposiveness or teleology which we discern in the course of things at large. It emphasizes the degree in which this broad purposiveness renders it self-evident to us that, in its ultimate significance, the universe is no impersonal system, but the manifestation of a Personal Will. By a "special providence," on the other hand, we mean an event or disposition of events which, in its own immediate significance, shows itself so brimful of worthy purpose as to appear self-evidently the work of a Divine Will—of a Divine Will, moreover, which is dealing with the situation on its individual merits and not on mere general principles.'[1]

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[1] Hogg, *Redemption From This World*, pp. 157, 187.

[2] Op. cit., p. 193.

I do not think this could be bettered ; but two points might be noted. What we call 'special providences' are occasions when we have specially felt and recognized the divine activity. It may have been even more wonderfully at work on occasions which have slipped our notice altogether. And it is none the less real in those numberless events which make up the daily life of ordinary people. The recognition is for those who are spiritually awake, and it may be in itself a great achievement. An incident in the life of R. L. Stevenson is recorded by Graham Balfour. When he was slowly recovering from hemorrhage of the lung, complicated by sciatica, ophthalmia set in. 'In silence and the dark, and in acute suffering, he was still cheery and undaunted. When the ophthalmia began and the doctor first announced his diagnosis, Mrs. Stevenson felt that it was more than any one could be expected to bear, and went into another room, and there, in her own phrase, "sat and gloomed." Louis rang his bell, and she went to him, saying, in the bitterness of her spirit, as she entered the room : "Well, I suppose this is the very best thing that could have happened!" "Why, how odd," wrote Louis on a piece of paper, "I was just going to say those very words"'[1]—a difference of insight!

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[1] Op. cit., pp. 194–5.

It is the events that stand out in marked contrast to other events that are often signalized as special providences; and more than others they suggest that God is interfering with the general order of things. There is 'God's Providence House' at Chester, the one house in that city said to have been passed by during the Great Plague. The name suggests that the other families in Chester were not equally under God's care. To take an opposite instance, Mrs. Mompesson, the wife of the heroic Vicar of Eyam, was the last victim of the Plague in that village. We naturally wonder why in the one case God *did* intervene, and in the other why He did *not*.

We must allow, not only for differences of insight on the human side, but for differences of action on the divine side. There may be situations in which God has good reason for some special and quite unusual action. There may be purposes for particular persons which determine special and unusual deliverances or sufferings for them. God may appear to be discriminating, even unfairly, for them or against them; but that is our ignorance: He is always good. Whatever use we make of the term 'interference,' it is plain that it can only have a meaning from the human point of view, and indicate some limitation of our knowledge or insight. The laws of nature are descriptive of God's ways of working, and their ground, as Campbell Fraser was fond of putting it, is the trustworthiness of the divine character. In all He does, God is consistent, true to Himself. Whatever He does in a particular case will be true to His own character, and harmonious in principle with everything else that He does anywhere. To object to any special or unusual action of Providence, therefore, on the ground that it would make life a tissue of uncertainties, has no weight when we remember the character of God. The doctrine of a special providence is sometimes contested on the ground that God is made to manipulate the laws of nature supernaturally, in order to make them produce what they could never produce of themselves. He has found nature unequal to His Providence, and has to intervene. But laws of nature never produce anything at all. They formulate ways of God's action in the physical world, looked at expressly as a system abstracted from human life, and its needs and interests. These laws *must* be specially adjusted as they bear on personal life—we are always adjusting them ourselves. No actual event is understood merely from the point of view of general law. You must know just how the entire complex of laws is operating at that particular point, and that is a special problem. We are persons, and God's conduct of our lives must involve His own particular purpose for each of us, and our own response to that purpose ; and here is something much more than can be summed up under ideas of law. This *more* is just what science takes no account of : it is really the most important and interesting part of His work. There is, therefore, no question, from God's point of view, of interference. He does not interfere with Himself.

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[1] Kelman, *The Faith of Robert Louis Stevenson*, pp. 259–60.

Perhaps one reason why special providence is so often spoken of as interference is that it is so difficult to lay down rules for its action. Every one is more comfortable when running on made tracks. We all like rules ; and science has only carried this tendency to extremes. Science is never satisfied until a *law* is formulated ; and it is conventionally supposed that it can have no exception. However, some one in time has the courage to face the exceptions, even to so respectable a law as that of gravitation ; and another law appears, and becomes equally dominant in its turn. The strange thing is that some of these absolute laws are mutually incompatible, at least as things now stand ; and we have a great scientist suggesting that the best procedure is to work by one set on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and by another set on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.[1] Now, if it is so difficult to apply the ideas of fixed law even to the physical universe, abstracted from personal relations, we are not to be surprised that the ways of God in dealing with individual persons should not be capable of arrangement into rules : it is in the very nature of the case.

The problems of special providence are not met by the device of separating the spiritual and the physical into two different spheres which have no relation to one another, as if physically we are under impersonal law, and spiritually under special guidance. The two spheres are not actually separable in experience, even if they may be in thought, and they cannot be separate for God. His activities as Creator must be in perfect harmony with His activities as the Father of Spirits. Perhaps the fact that we now know so much about the vast extent and complexity of the physical universe both in space and time, and that man is quite a recent arrival on the scene, gives us a tendency to think of humanity as almost a divine after-thought, coming into a fixed order of things into which it does not properly fit. In fact, materialism looks onwards to a dead universe, from which, after his brief intrusion, man has entirely disappeared. We want to reverse this estimate, and to realize that the spiritual comes first in actuality, and transcends all time and all space. The God of nature is first of all the God of grace ; and with Him the principle more fixed and absolute than any other is the blessing of each child. The order of nature is a great and wonderful thing ; it has a purpose, and that purpose is the education of the individual soul.

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[1] Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 194.

There is no desire to question the fact of fixed laws. It is the *interaction* of the fixed laws that is infinitely variable ; and such interaction cannot possibly be explained by the laws themselves. It is to be explained by the Purpose which determines both their actuality and their interaction ; and that purpose is the welfare of persons. We thus get both determination and freedom. We might perhaps say that the suspensions of any general law which might be involved in ordinary providential action are infinitesimal from the point of view of the average of applications of the law, which is all that science is really concerned with, but supremely important as they enter into individual personal experience.

We do not expect that God's activity from the point of view of special providence will be irregular and incalculable, or will in any way discredit the validity of general laws. Guidance for ordinary people under ordinary conditions, may go along very similar lines, and yet in fine details be specially adapted to the needs of each individual. This is all so familiar and works on such a large scale that we may not notice that there is any guidance at all. But what we must not exclude is the possibility that God may take quite exceptional action if there is special need for it ; and such action may involve considerable interference with the ordinary routine of nature. Again, in a truly religious life, prayer comes in as a supremely important factor, and opens the way for God to do a great many things which He could not do where prayer is absent.

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It is astonishing to what an extent that elusive and intractible material called money has been bestowed in answer to prayer. For over seventy years George Müller's orphanages at Bristol, after having been built, were also supported entirely by means of prayer. Müller says, 'Hundreds of times we have commenced the day without a penny in hand, but our Heavenly Father has sent supplies by the moment they were actually required. There never was a time when we had no wholesome meal.' 'We have no committees, no collectors, no voting, and no endowments. All has come in answer to believing prayer.' 'Expect great things from God and great things you will have.' Equally wonderful was the experience of William Quarrier, who founded the orphan homes at the Bridge of Weir. He began on the principle that he would ask no man for money, but would trust God for everything. The remarkable feature here is that so many times a particular sum was wanted for a particular work; that sum was asked for, and that exact sum arrived. Quarrier said, 'It is my habit to ask God for definite things, and He always gives definite answers.' Of course, in cases like this, we have a wholly unselfish object in the prayer, and a very high level of faith. It is under such conditions that God can do most.

There is no more gracious record of the power of prayer than the story of Pastor Hsi. His conversion was due to the prayers of David Hill. His deliverance from the bondage of opium was instantaneous and complete, in answer to prayer. The conversion of his wife, and her deliverance from an alien evil power, was a similar experience. His life's work was largely directed to the saving of the victims of opium. In answer to prayer he was led to the discovery of a cheap and efficacious remedy which had great success. In the spirit of prayer he founded scores of opium-refuges, which were the means of untold good to the bodies and souls of men. Only once was he under the necessity of closing a refuge; and that was the only case in which he had acted without definite prayer for the divine guidance.

In cases like these there is not much that would appear to contravene purely physical law, but a great deal that would be beyond any merely psychological explanation. There is only one theory that will fit them, and that is the theory of special divine guidance.

It seems to be often assumed, as a matter of course, that, though God cannot in any way control physical events for the help of individuals, He can quite easily control mental events. But mental events are linked up into causal chains just as definitely as physical events. We can only think of God's action as somehow taking place *above* the causal mechanism, whether in the mental or the physical world. It must be equally possible for Him in both, and equally mysterious to us. But it is quite inconsistent to accept this action as a matter of course in the mental realm, and refuse to accept it in the physical realm.

God's Mind and Ours

If we ask *how* God can influence men's minds, one answer is, that we cannot possibly say ; and another, that He can be just as easily supposed to influence our minds as we can those of one another. The two answers amount to the same thing ; for we do not understand in the least how our thoughts influence our friends' minds.

Here we are in the regions of physiology and psychology, and we know that every mental or psychic event of our experience is physically conditioned. Our experience is built up on ideas received through our senses from without ; and, however much they may be internally elaborated, they are always mediated by the activity of the cells of the brain-cortex. We hear a clock chime, and the source of our experience is purely material. We sit and talk with a friend, and the ideas and feelings that come to us are equally mediated by certain air-waves ; but we judge that this latter experience is of a totally different character, because it involves some of the highest reactions and results of which our nature is capable. It is a reasonable faith, borne out by its practical results, that we have a living spiritual fellowship with finite persons like ourselves. Now, when I understand the words spoken by another, or my will impinges upon his, or my sympathy enfolds him, there is a contact and communion that is wholly immaterial, though it has collateral physical signs and effects.

Here mind is in touch with mind. Now, since all the physical conditions involved cannot account either for minds or their interaction, this must depend upon a spiritual divine activity. This being the case, I do not see that there is any scientific principle that prevents us from believing that the divine activity which supports all our thinking, and is always personal in the last resort, can directly affect our minds, which means that God can directly suggest thoughts to us, quicken our emotions, and inspire our will. My fellowship with my neighbour must be mediated, anyhow, by the divine mind ; and my communication, so to speak, direct with the Central, should be easier than that with my neighbour, and just as natural. The question it is right to ask is, Are there experiences in which a higher range of spiritual effort and activity is involved than in any normal human friendship, and are there results which may be called adequate, which may justify us in our belief that we have been in touch with the divine?

The reality of human intercourse is being continually checked by its reciprocal signs and effects in the material world. A smile and a loving word restore peace to a sobbing child. A passing tram-car drowns my friend's voice, and momentarily holds up our conversation. Is there anything by which we can test the reality of communion with the Infinite Spirit? Is there not, for every thinking man, at times a sense of the infinite in the finite? The sight of daisies growing in the grass opens up to us vistas of infinite beauty and generosity and power. It takes a whole God to account for a daisy. There are many records of those who, in the midst of the glories of nature, have suddenly become aware of a Presence, and have realized that God was there. Man himself is much more wonderful than anything else in nature; for he can reflect upon himself, and he tries to find out what his own life means. He knows that he did not bring himself into being: his life is a gift. He is capable of ideas of the true and the beautiful and the good; and these capacities are given. All such thoughts and the impulses that accompany them *are* God's mind in communication with ours, reaching us on a higher level than any of His other activities. Since we are persons, we are beyond any mechanical compulsion, and so God's thoughts reach us, shall we say, as suggestions, as ideals, as the sense of duty. It is more difficult to understand how a man can resist God than how he can obey Him; for if a man hates, he must do it by means of powers God has given him. That this is possible, however inconceivable, is a fundamental fact. Love is not love unless it is freely given. But surely, if a man can keep God out of his life, he can still more let Him in. His darkness is his own; his light is of God: and, as his heart goes out to God, he becomes progressively more like Him. There come into his life harmony, peace, moral victory; and these things are the most potent realities there are. In such a life the divine guidance is ever present, and it produces results in the material world in manifold ways. Here is unceasing prayer and unbroken communion. Here everything is at once natural and supernatural.

Granted, then, that a man may cultivate a life of close and full communion with God, we may expect commensurate results which will be both spiritual and material, because his ways run in conformity with the deepest laws of all things. To an increasing extent physical health will go with peace of mind and purity of living. Perfect goodwill towards others will have all sorts of beneficent results in the social world. The frank acceptance of disaster and failure when following the divine call is the most powerful redeeming influence that the world knows, as the Cross of Jesus witnesses. In all this we can meet with no difficulty that science could properly raise. But we have to make room for divine guidance that enters into particular situations of individuals, especially in connexion with answers to prayer. When Müller laid the needs of his orphans before God, was it, so to speak, in order that God should suggest the needs of the children to men who could help ? We have to make room for great numbers of similar examples. A man is impressed with the feeling that he ought to speak to some one whom he meets casually. He does so, with the result that he saves him from suicide. A young man about to let himself go along a very perilous moral course is aware of a subtle constraint, and turns away from the danger. He afterwards finds that a friend had at that very time been praying for him, being moved by a feeling that he must do so. In a case of which I have personal knowledge, a man was impelled to take a gift of money to one of whom he had never before heard, and to a town he had no intention of visiting. He was given the name of the man and the street in which he lived ; and his gift met a critical situation, and was a response to prayer. Here, surely, there is One who knows, and is able to help, and able to help people to help one another.

THREE SPECIAL INSTANCES

In Sven Hedin's book, *My Life as an Explorer*, there is a record which may be transcribed in full. In traversing a Central Asian desert, disaster befell the caravan. Dying camels and men were strung out along the route ; and Hedin struggled on alone trying to find water. He says, ' I knew that the course of the river was almost due north. The shortest distance to the right-hand shore would therefore be straight eastward. Although the moon was up, and I watched the compass, I was all the time, and unconsciously, being drawn toward the south-east. There was no use fighting this force. I walked as though led by an invisible hand. Finally, I resisted no more, but walked toward the south-east, where the moon was. I frequently sat down and rested. I was then overcome by a terrible desire for sleep. My head sank to the ground, and I had to use all my will-power not to go to sleep. Had I gone to sleep, exhausted as I was, I am sure I should never have waked again. I had gone about one mile when the outlines of the forest on the eastern shore appeared below the moon. Dense thickets of bushes and reeds grew on the terraced shore. A fallen poplar stretched its dark trunk down towards the river-bed. It looked like the body of a crocodile. The bed still remained dry as before. It was not far to the shore where I must lie down and die. My life hung on a hair. Suddenly I started, and stopped short. A water-bird, a wild duck or goose, rose on whirring wings and I heard a splash. The next moment, I stood on the edge of a pool, seventy feet long and fifteen feet wide ! The water looked as black as ink in the moonlight. The overturned poplar-trunk was reflected in its depths. In the silent night I thanked God for my miraculous deliverance. Had I continued eastwards I should have been lost. In fact, if I had touched shore only a hundred yards north or south of the pool, I should have believed the entire river-bed to be dry. Later on, I christened this pool Khoda-verdi-Kol, or " the Pool of God's Gift." '

Here we have an experience of which there is *no* scientific explanation. How are you to set about it? Is it an abstruse sum in hydraulics? Was there some latent water-finding instinct at work, and, if so, how did it achieve such marvellous exactness? Or was the subconscious mind of the wild goose radiating messages? On this line one is reduced to talking nonsense. It is a clear case of divine guidance. In it no law of nature is transgressed to outward seeming. An onlooker, if there could have been one, would have supposed that Hedin knew exactly where the water was. He did not know; but God knew. But, of course, no one can judge of the full value and meaning of such experiences except those who have them. When a man keeps every avenue of his being open to the divine influences, he acquires a very firm conviction that he is being led, not always because of remarkable events like that which is here recorded, but through the daily, and almost hourly, gifts of grace to meet every need.

Obviously, if God has free access to the minds of men who will respond to Him, all sorts of results will follow in the material realm. For instance, when His will is accepted in any thorough way, there will be no more war, either national or industrial; and the material results of this will be incalculable. There may be also physical happenings that appear to be miraculous, but are really due to the leading of men's minds so as to control some particular physical emergency. ' Through the direct contact of the divine mind with the human mind, which it is beyond the power of science to assert or to deny, and through the normal working of the human mind, so inspired, upon the physical—which, again, science cannot gainsay—there is opened out an indefinite scope for modification of nature's tendency, again involving no breach of known law, and no stultification of scientific intelligence.'[1]

Does God's guidance reach to what is merely physical —for instance, the weather? Again, Tennant says, 'Direct divine guidance of the purely physical is not to be banished as a scientific impossibility, or as involving any upsetting of a reign of law of which science can legitimately speak.'[2]

Very many have seen the divine hand in the storms that scattered the Spanish Armada. The King of Spain, when news came of the disaster, said, in effect, that he could not contend with the powers of the universe. Something of the same sort happened when the Amalekites were discomfited in the Pass of Beth-Horon, and the Moors in the mountains of Asturias.

In recounting the landing of William of Orange in 1688, Macaulay says, 'The wind had blown strong from the east while the Prince wished to sail down the Channel; had turned to the south when he wished to enter Torbay; had sunk to a calm during the disembarking; and as soon as the disembarkation was completed, had risen to a storm, and had met the pursuers in the face.'[3]

Macaulay says that 'men of more piety than judgement,' had seen in this, as in the case of the Armada, to which he also refers, the work of God. But piety sometimes judges more wisely than the doubter.

This case seemed to me to be one of great interest, and I therefore consulted Miss Marjorie Bowen, who is *facile princeps* in this department of history, upon some points connected with it. She kindly permits me to make use of her letter. She says that the facts are correctly stated. The operation of convoying a large army right down the Channel to Torbay was one of great risk, and implied great daring on William's part. In fact, the naval authorities, to quote Miss Bowen, 'consider William's expedition of 1688 so incredibly audacious that he could hardly have realized what he was doing.' It was its complete success that afterwards disguised the perilous nature of it. But now we have to add that both William and his wife Mary were people who prayed about everything. William had a very constant sense of divine guidance, and this alone sustained him in undertaking apparently impossible tasks, and maintaining them with unwavering tenacity ; and it explains the extraordinary daring of some of his ventures. He knew the risks probably much better than any one else, but he trusted in God; and 'there is no restraint with the Lord to save by many or by few.' It might seem waste of time to discuss such a topic as praying about the weather ; and yet there is nothing that is constantly affecting our daily lives more closely, even though in a minor way. Many Christian people now say off-hand that such prayer is absurd. They would not believe that God could quiet a storm in answer to prayer, and bring the travellers to 'the haven where they would be.' I suppose they would not accept as history our Lord's stilling of the storm on the lake ; but for those who do, that is a definite instance of providential action in the physical order.[1] What Jesus did then, God might do now. I suppose these critics would not believe that Providence intervened when Paul's ship came ashore at Malta, or that an angel brought to Paul the message, 'God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee.'

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[1] Tennant, in *The Modern Churchman*, vol. xiv., p. 318.

[2] Op. cit., p. 9.

[3] Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. ii. Quoted in McCosh, *Method of the Divine Government*, p. 203.

If we believe that God may intervene in such matters, of course we must recognize large reservations. There are so many conflicting personal interests and general conditions involved, that in no particular case could one see very far. For my own part, when I pray about the weather, which I do, I mention the matter as it concerns the various interests involved, more or less important practically, and there I leave it. It is to be noted that the Revised Prayer Book has by no means excluded prayers about the weather, but has carefully revised them, and even added to them. 'Preserve us from the dangers of the sea.' 'O send Thy word of command to rebuke the raging winds, and the roaring sea.' 'Send us, we beseech Thee, such seasonable weather that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort, and to Thy honour.'

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[1] Cf. Warr, *The Unseen Host*, pp. 113 ff.

In the *Methodist Recorder* there is the story of a little girl who was run over by an omnibus, and picked up quite uninjured. She said to her mother, 'Well, Mamma, I felt the two wheels pass over me, but I saw the angels lifting them up.' In the afternoon, when the mother was describing to a friend the child's marvellous escape from death, the child broke out with, 'Why, Mamma, I told you this morning I saw the angels lifting the wheels up, so that they could not hurt me.' It is easy enough to make light of a story like this. The presence of a rut, or of a brick, might have caused the wheels to jump, and so to miss the child; and then the escape might be put down to accident. Yet, even so, God might have arranged the coincidence. There is no chance, really. 'The lot is cast into the lap; but the *whole* disposing thereof is of the Lord.' And if there were an angel, the lifting of the wheels was a momentary suspension of the law of gravitation, as when a man lifts a weight. It is really a case of evidence. The child saw the angels. She was not expecting them: she was not expecting anything. It was all too sudden. Her conviction of divine help would never be shaken by all that materialism could ever say. But the moment one mentions a definite case like this, whole batteries of general principles are brought to bear on it by outsiders, who judge of it by their own experience, and in view of their own conceptions of the general order of things. One will say that there was a complete illusion. The wheels never left the ground. They just missed the child ; but, as it appeared that they must pass over her, and actually did not, they seemed to jump. Another that there must have been some solid object that made the wheels jump, and was never noticed in the excitement of the moment. Then the angels might be merely the product of the child's imagination. In short, there *are* no angels ; and therefore they could not lift wheels. But the child may have been right, all the time. Volumes might be filled with well-authenticated instances of a similar kind.

VIII

PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER

The Problem of Prayer

The study of prayer is inseparable from that of Providence ; and in the previous chapter already a good deal has been said about it ; but it is so important that some special consideration of it is due. Obviously it is prayer as *petition* that comes most into view in this connexion, as the means of releasing the divine activity for its highest manifestations, according to our Lord's words : ' Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.' But prayer is also the attention and expectation of the soul that waits to hear and hastens to obey. So in a life of prayer the will of God and the work of Providence have a free course. On the other hand, Providence is at work also outside the region of prayer ; for, however irreligious a man may be, God is always doing all He can to bless him. ' He is kind to the unthankful and the evil.' And, beyond the sphere of human life, Providence is at work in the whole universe that constitutes man's field of experience. Prayer, then, is that response which is awakened in the human heart by the grace of God. Wherever prayer is, God has been already manifested in some way.

It will be helpful to consider generally the subject of prayer ; for limited views about prayer will involve limited views about Providence also.

We note first that prayer is a quite universal factor of human experience. It is found in the most primitive types of religion ; and all primitive races have some sort of religion. It is found even in types of religion that are theoretically without belief in a personal God. It may take form in most crude and mechanical practices ; it may consist largely in selfish, and even immoral, petitions ; but, even so, it is prayer of a sort. It seems instinctive and natural to man. Even when it has apparently been abandoned in an irreligious life, it wells up in hours of great crisis. It expresses a universal sense of need, and a feeling at the same time that some unseen Power can supply that need. This fact is, for Christians, strong evidence that the eternal Father has never quite lost His response in human hearts. In this connexion, Fosdick says: 'Can it be that all men, in all ages and all lands, have been engaged in "talking for ever to a silent world from which no answer comes?" If we can be sure of anything, is it not this—that wherever a human function has persisted, unwearied by time, uncrushed by disappointment, rising to noblest form and finest use in the noblest and finest souls, that function corresponds with some reality? Hunger could never have persisted without food, nor breathing without air, nor intellectual life without truth, nor prayer without God.'[1] Thus everywhere, in all ages, the kindness of God in His Providence has had some room in which to move, and has been leading men to higher things.

No one can deny the actual effectiveness of prayer. A man who truly prays enters into a realm of peace. He receives strength to meet the assaults of life and rise above its treacheries and uncertainties. Here, some will say, he is merely drawing upon the hidden resources of his own nature. His soul rises to the full height of its powers ; and so prayer is, in this way, its own answer ; and we have no need to call in a God at all. But would ordinary common-sense people go on praying, as a matter of form, to God, after they had found out there was no God, just as a clever way of helping themselves? It does not seem probable. A doctor sometimes gives a patient a bottle of coloured water or pills made of something perfectly inert; and the patient greatly benefits by taking them. But the whole benefit depends on his not knowing that he is being hoaxed. If the doctor said to him, 'These pills are only made of a little dough; but, if you imagine quite strongly that they will cure you, it will be all right'—if the doctor said that, the pills would go promptly into the gutter. Equally so, if prayer were only an address to an imaginary God, it would have been found out long ago, and no sensible man would pray. As Pratt says, 'No, if the subjective value of prayer be all the value it has, we wise psychologists of religion had best keep the fact to ourselves; otherwise the game will soon be up and we shall have no religion left to psychologize about.'[1]

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[1] Fosdick, *The Meaning of Prayer*, pp. 13–14.

It is equally unsatisfactory to attempt to explain the results of prayer for other people by telepathy alone. There are endless examples which show that when one person is earnestly praying for another, influences pass, and help is given; but the range and complexity of the factors involved are far beyond such a simple explanation. Here God and His people are in a partnership for providential purposes. Telepathy might account for something; but that could not be all the story. In prayer, 'I link my personality, with all its faculties known and unknown, explained and unexplained, with God, so that with the help of my poor personality He can release energies into that other life which otherwise would be closed to Him and to me. If there is anything in telepathy between one mind and another, then the psychic power of that mind will have, as one might say, its voltage, or dynamic power, tremendously increased if God be definitely and consciously linked in the transaction.'[1]

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[1] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 336.

A reference may also be made to the view of prayer which regards it as a kind of ' force ' which sets going waves of energy capable of producing results, not only on the minds of others, at whatever distance, but even on material things. The 'New Thought,' for instance, teaches that we attract to ourselves the things we earnestly and steadily desire. But true prayer is the communion of the soul with the Heavenly Father ; and, whatever results it may have in the spiritual or physical realm, they are due to His direct action. There is no such thing as an impersonal spiritual or quasi-spiritual ' force.'

Even for those who believe in God, prayer has sometimes been disparaged. It has been described as a form of cowardice. Rousseau writes, ' Why should I ask of Him what He has given me ? Has He not given me conscience to love the good, reason to know it, liberty to choose it ? If I do wrong, I have no excuse ; I do it because I wish to : to ask Him to change my will, is to ask of Him what He asks of me ; it is to wish Him to do my work whilst I receive the pay.'[2] So Kant regarded prayer as pure presumption, an attempt to evade the discipline of moral effort.

Such views imply that God launches us out into the world, and then expects us to take care of ourselves. But the life of persons is a growing thing. They have the capacity for moral perfection ; but it is a germ, a seed, that needs culture. The God who gave the life in its first immaturity watches over it. He by His Providence graciously guides and incites to that effort which is needed to achieve character ; and all through life deals with us as parents with their children. He is ever responding to every noble choice, and to all the explorations of our reasoning powers ; and ever, as our powers grow and our understanding is enlarged, He sets before us new regions in which to adventure, and new tasks to accomplish. The life of prayer, far from being presumption or cowardice, is a life of filial trust and spiritual heroism.

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[1] Weatherhead, *Methodist Recorder*, August 15, 1929.

[2] Émile Rousseau. Quoted by Ménégoz, *Le Problème de la Prière*, p.17.

Man as personal can only find his true home in a Reality that is personal. His soul thirsts for God, for the living God. Therefore prayer, as it is the highest, is the most truly natural exercise of man's powers. It is God's life in the soul, and the soul's life in God. Through prayer, man attains an understanding of God's will for him ; and God has freedom to achieve His gracious purpose in giving him life. Here is Providence in full action.

Prayer and the Natural Order

But now the point is raised which we have already had to discuss—namely, that prayer belongs to the spiritual realm, and can have no effects in the material realm, which is governed by unchangeable law. But it is characteristic of personal action that it *can* intervene in the mechanical system of things. A child falls into deep water, and cries for help. By the operation of natural law, he will certainly be drowned. But some one who can swim hears the cry, and the child is saved. The nature of the water is just as much *for* the one who can swim as it is against the one who cannot. It is the personal action that decides what shall happen.

Our Lord expressly compares the divine action to the human, just in this connexion. He says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' Asking God for something is as natural and simple as asking our next-door neighbour for something, or as knocking at our neighbour's door when we pay him a visit.

It is just as natural that the Supreme Person should be able to adjust physical forces in answer to prayer as that we should. Fosdick writes, ' Do we mean to say that God is less free than we are? Are we, the creatures, in so large measure masters of law-abiding forces and is He, the Creator, a slave to them? Are the universal powers plastic and usable in our hands, and in His hands stiff and rigid? The whole analogy of human experience suggests that the world is not governed by law; that it is governed by God according to law. He providentially utilizes, manipulates, and combines His own invariable ways of acting to serve His own eternal purposes.'[1]

It has been objected here that we have not a proper parallel; since man manipulates the order of nature from outside, whilst God's action is wholly within nature, and it is wrong to speak of the order of nature, *plus* divine manipulation, available to those who pray. But the order of nature in its complete fullness is a system of divine adjustments for definite ends; and these ends finally are the blessing of God's children, and of them as individuals. Directly we get to the particular person, the order of nature *becomes* the order of Providence; and thus will involve just those special adjustments that are needed for each case. On the other hand, it is not correct to speak of man, from this point of view, as ' outside ' the order of nature. His aims and purposes in regard to the physical world belong to his limited but real transcendence of nature, and they are realized by means of his immanence in nature (in his own body first of all). God's transcendent purposes go much further, and are realized in a fully adequate way through His immanence in nature. There seems to be a true parity in the modes of action. Man has an effective control of nature for purposive action, and how much more God.

This fact of the human control of nature can be pushed to the point of disparaging prayer ; as if God meant us to find out everything for ourselves, and so work out our own salvation. From this point of view there is more need for scientific research than for prayer. But we need not set one method of Providence in opposition to another. Doubtless God does mean us to win by toilsome discipline and patient thought an increasing control over nature. There are immense moral gains in the process. But even in the physical realm there will always be contingencies that are beyond the reach of all human wisdom and foresight ; and all the while there are the countless individuals at all stages of this slow advance. 'Does it not seem likely that Providence was there in those old and backward times, managing things in some rough kind of way before our cleverness was born ? '[1] And for to-day, 'We may be much cleverer than our fathers were, but there is none of us yet so desperately clever that we can do without the Heavenly Father's care, or without the *prayer* which the sense of that care is sure to inspire.'[2]

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[1] Fosdick, *The Meaning of Prayer*, p. 108.

We are clever enough, alas ! Some one has said that science has won for us powers fit for the gods, and we bring to their use the mentality of schoolboys. There never was more need for prayer, that we may have fuller access to those treasures of moral and spiritual life without which all our mastery of nature will only ruin us.

Quite in the opposite direction it is argued that the very fact that the order of nature is controlled by God for spiritual ends makes all prayer superfluous. God knows so much better than we do what is the best course of things for us, and has such perfect goodwill to give us the best, that there is no need to ask for anything. But such an argument implies a very limited view of the scope of prayer, and of the relations of the Father to His children. It is inadequate, even if prayer is nothing

[1] Porteous, *Order and Grace*, p. 138. [2] Op. cit., p. 140.

more than asking. A human parent knows what is best for his children ; but he wants them to express their desires freely, for more reasons than one. Only so can he educate them to know what the best gifts are. Only so can the commerce of love be realized, and in asking and receiving the fullness of mutual joy. The intercourse itself is of far more importance than the particular things with which it is concerned. Ménégoz has some very helpful thoughts in this connexion : 'God, who is love, knows all. Whilst from this fact, common sense concludes that it is not necessary to pray, because it seems useless and absurd to enlighten God on what He knows already—Christ draws the opposite conclusion (Matt. vi. 8, 9)—it is exactly because the God of Jesus is Love, that it is agreeable to Him—as to all who love—to be appealed to by those to whom His love belongs, to be told by them and told again what He knows already, to grant to them, in answering their prayer, that which He always intended for them.'[1]

PRAYER AS FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

The highest purpose of God is to perfect His relations with His human children. 'A praying creature, so far from being a superfluity in a world ruled by Providence, is Providence's highest individual product, and is that through which Providence looks out to a width and elevation of work which apart from it would be impossible.' 'Prayer, thus, instead of being a work of supererogation, an uncalled-for, officious, over-anxious attempt to interfere with One who wants no hints or help from us, is the most vital thing in the higher reaches of human progress.'[2] If we reflect for a moment upon the place of prayer in the life of the

[1] Ménégoz, *Le Problème de la Prière*, p. 454.

[2] Porteous, *Order and Grace*, pp. 142, 144.

Master, we must realize that the glory of that life was its full and unbroken fellowship with God. It was in the spirit of prayer that He could say, 'All things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine.'

It follows directly that in this personal fellowship everything is included, the things of the spirit, and all things material as well. Our lives are made up of little things to a great extent ; and the care of Providence extends to those little things. 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' Think of all the little things that fill up the daily toll of a mother's service of her children ; they are each one the expression of her love. And the child's relation to the Heavenly Father is of such a kind. Paul says, 'In nothing be anxious ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.'

This 'everything' will include our health, our home concerns, our business, our friends, the common weal, even the weather, besides all the difficult situations that may arise. It is the spirit of trust that comes out in such prayer ; and that trust will be well content to leave the answer to the sovereign wisdom and love of God. He has all the other children to think about, and therefore some of our requests may clash with their needs ; but of this we may be sure, that God has such resources at His disposal that He can secure *my* highest good, not only without jeopardizing that of anybody else, but in such a way as to make my highest good contribute to that of all.

So we reach a life of which the very atmosphere is prayer, such life as our Lord Himself lived, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of God. Of the life of such an one it may be said, that 'though he may be in identically similar circumstances with the prayerless man, working at the same employment, his life has different meanings, different contacts, different experiences, achieves different values, and develops different opportunities. The currents are moving between him and God all the time. Things may happen because God is there in living contact with his spirit and life.'[1]

A welcome guide in this region is *The Practice of the Presence of God*, from which three extracts may be given. Brother Lawrence said, 'That his prayer was nothing else but a sense of the presence of God, his soul being at that time insensible to everything but divine love : and that when the appointed times of prayer were past, he found no difference, because he still continued with God, praising and blessing Him with all his might, so that he passed his life in continual joy ; yet hoped that God would give him somewhat to suffer, when he should grow stronger.' 'So likewise, in his business in the kitchen (to which he had naturally a great aversion), having accustomed himself to do everything there for the love of God, and with prayer, upon all occasions, for His grace to do his work well, he had found everything easy, during the fifteen years that he had been employed there.' 'The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer ; and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament.'

This near sense of God's presence and guidance has been very fully developed in the Society of Friends. They have made, one might say, a deliberate practice of listening for the guiding voice, in things both great and small. 'One of the first Quaker lessons is that of paying attention to what they call "a stop in the mind" —i.e., a sense of the restraint of the Spirit.' And 'over against the "stop in the mind," there must be a term to express "a stir in the mind"; this stir in the mind the Friends call a "concern"; they say, "I have a concern to go to this place, to talk to this people." '[1]

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[1] Porteous, *Order and Grace*, p. 153.

'To Quakers, who live always in near touch with the spiritual, no happening is very strange: a good happening, which to others might seem almost miraculous, is no great surprise to those who see all the armies of heaven at hand; and a bad happening is not overwhelming to those that have their roots elsewhere, and hold their souls in a peace not of this world.' They realize 'the abiding presence of God, the which, if a man has, he has all, life and death, and poverty and wealth, and this world and the next mattering nothing, and good repute and ill, for besides it there is nothing and in it there is everything—the heart of all mysteries, the stay in all circumstances, the shining in brightness, and the strong hand in the dark.'[2] In lives so attuned, God's Providence can control every happening of whatever kind; and thus perfectly 'God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love Him.'

At the same time, the witness of the 'inner light' must be guarded from fanaticism. Paul deals with the subject when he asserts the superiority of the way of love to that of the cultivation of ecstatic 'gifts' of the Spirit. Wesley asserted the reality of the direct witness of God in the spirit of man; and at the same time, with equal emphasis, the need that this witness should be matched by the witness of a good conscience in the sight of God—that is, by strict obedience to conscience as interpreted in the fullest Christian light. No inner 'impression' is ever to override the plain precepts of morality. No Christian is to presume to be a law to himself. Thrills of physical emotion can easily be interpreted as tokens of God's presence, and then cultivated for their own sake; than which nothing could be more dangerous. Queer, half-hysterical manifestations, which are very contagious, can be mistaken for 'signs.' Common sense and ordinary morality are never to be deserted on the pretext of any sign. Mrs. H. W. Smith, who wrote that most helpful book, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, made a very thorough first-hand study of religious fanaticism ; and for her the conclusion of the whole matter is that the best way for a Christian is that of 'an ordinary everyday walking in the path of duty, and especially in the path of kindness.'[1] Here Providence is day by day giving us endless openings and opportunities. If we can but see that God is *there*, we have the best 'sign,' the hallmark of God on our everyday calling.

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[1] Harris, *The Guiding Hand of God*, pp. 41, 45.

[2] Una Silberrad, *Sampson Rideout, Quaker*, pp. 183, 196.

The Certainty of God

Here a few words may be said about the *certainty* of God which is the privilege of His children, and belongs to the life of prayer. It is mystical—that is, it cannot be explained to any one who wants to argue about it.

The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know.

I think this, for most Christians, takes the form of an absolute certainty about Christ. They say, with Peter, 'Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' They accept the Lord's own words, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' In time, in eternity, they are safe in Him. This is an experience in which conscience has peace, and reason has light, and will has power. The world is at their feet.

Of such experiences one example may be given from the many which Pratt cites. It is a sense of certainty which is very widespread amongst Christian people; and it carries its own credentials. 'For eleven years I have never for a moment lost the blessed sense of the Presence and indwelling of God. God is as real as He is dear to me, and His nearness and dearness are unspeakably rich and indescribable, save in the most exaggerated terms. I know the presence and the voice of my Beloved. When I talk with Him it is as natural and as simple, but far more delightful, than speaking to a dear one close at hand. I know what it is to love God and let Him love me actively. This continued state is my very life.'[1] Of such experiences Pratt sums up in the following words: 'The constant peace, the certainty that God is near, that underneath are the everlasting arms, and that one's life is under His continued guidance—this is for many men and women an actuality, conditioned only upon their following the moral guidance which their consciences give, and keeping their ears always open for the divine voice. By living *as though* God were present they have and keep the constant assurance that He *is* present.'[2]

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[1] *Religious Fanaticism*, edited by Ray Strachey, p. 253.

There is an experience of prayer in which the soul appears to be wholly lost in the Ineffable; but to consider this in any detail would carry us too far away from the subject in hand. About the problem of the great mystics and their experiences this may be noted, that, when all deductions have been made for possibly unhealthy conditions, there is, for ordinary people, at least the constant reminder of a great ideal and aspiration; for the one prayer of the great mystics is this: 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.' *And yet*, it may be, there is a more excellent way.

Prayer and the Work of God

Lastly, something may be said especially in reference to the divine side of prayer. As has been suggested already, since prayer is communion with God, its very possibility is God's gift. We think of Augustine's words, 'Thou couldest not seek Me, unless thou hadst already found Me.' 'Finding God is really letting God find us; for our search for Him is simply surrender to His search for us. When the truth of this is clearly seen, prayer becomes real. There is no more talking into empty space, no more fumbling in the dark to lay hold on Him.'[1] 'For indeed it is not the spirit of man that of itself seeks and finds God, it is the Spirit of God that seeks and finds man and that realizes itself in the human world first in and through that spiritual striving towards Himself. Prayer is the soul saying, "Abba, Father," in response to the Father who has revealed Himself to the soul.'[2] God is always present, always speaking, always first—that is the dominating thought about prayer. Thus to know God more fully is to know what His purposes are, and to co-operate with Him in the achieving of those purposes. In his great treatise on Prayer, Ménégoz is continually insisting that the supreme object of prayer is to bring the Christian into line with God's universal work of salvation. 'Christian prayer is the cry of a heart which, won by the grace of the sovereign God, knows no other joy than that of co-operating with this God and of seeing the divine work of salvation triumph in human society.'[3] Once we realize the greatness of our calling, the question of answers to prayer settles itself. The prayer that includes all others is, 'Thy will be done, Thy Kingdom come.' To pray such a prayer is to put ourselves at once in line with the great work of God, and to be united in faith and holy effort with all God's people. When that prayer is truly offered, it means that God's will is already a factor, the most potent factor, in the life of him who prays. The answer is already in the prayer.

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[1] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 342. [2] Op. cit., p. 362.

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[1] Fosdick, *The Meaning of Prayer*, p. 89.

[2] Porteous, *Order and Grace*, p. 142.

[3] Ménégoz, *Le Problème de la Prière*, p. 211.

To realize that the supreme object of prayer is the furtherance of the universal work of God will give us a deeper knowledge of the range of answers to prayer, and so of the meaning of God's Providence in our lives. We are dear to Him individually ; and He may honour us most by calling upon us to face loss and disappointment and suffering, that so we may be made the means of blessing to others. And this is not to say that such uses of suffering are a compensation to us for its pain. Paul could speak of glorying in tribulation, because through such experiences God's power was being realized through him for the extension of His Kingdom. He could speak of filling up the complement of Christ's sufferings for His body's sake, the Church. Providence is often to be recognized, not as guiding us through suffering to relief, but as leading us into suffering because of its fruitfulness. And beyond this is the knowledge that Providence is shaping our lives through co-operation with others into a perfected kingdom, in which they and we are blessed in and for one another. We all as living stones are being built up into a spiritual temple, each one shaped and fitted so that we are individually perfected, and at the same time share in the beauty of the whole, and contribute to it. We belong to a perfected humanity, of which Christ is the Head, and His Spirit is the Life.

It is a very marked character of our Lord's practice of prayer that it was so evidently concerned with the accomplishment of His mission and with the welfare of His disciples. ' My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work.' The three occasions on which a voice from heaven to Him is recorded were all occasions of special dedication to the appointed work. Here, I think, we have a complete contrast to the attitude of the great mystics. They seem absorbed in attaining the vision of God for themselves, but Jesus in accomplishing the will of God for men's salvation. Their 'way' is generally that of extreme asceticism and of withdrawal from the common life of men, a way which Jesus deliberately set aside; at any rate, it took a secondary place in His life. We cannot doubt which is the higher ideal.[1] Even the vision of God is not to be a wonder whose contemplation absorbs us to the exclusion of everything else, but rather empowers us, when we come down from the heights, to minister healing and grace to the needy folk below.

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[1] It is not forgotten that for some of the great mystics there was a very effective practical side to their religious activities.

IX

THE LIFE OF FAITH

The General Function of Faith

The divine activities of Providence are always conditioned by the human activities of faith. The way of life is from faith to faith, to a deeper and more conscious faith. In order best to understand the ways and possibilities of Providence we need to get as full a conception as we can of the important part faith plays in human life generally. Wherever there is faith, in the most hidden and rudimentary form, there is an opportunity for Providence ; and according to men's faith is their growth into fuller life.

All human action has a purpose in it. If we had no aim, we could not act at all ; and an aim implies faith. Willed action is also intelligent action ; for will, as Knox says, is 'intelligence in action.' It follows that faith is inseparable from intelligence ; and faith can never be opposed to knowledge, but is the way to knowledge. 'Without faith it is impossible to gain knowledge ; for he that would know must believe that the world is knowable and that it does discover knowledge to him that seeks it.'[1]

Scott Holland puts this point very clearly ; one quotation may be given : 'We live by trust ; life in its most rational and experimental form is still venture, a hope which only justifies itself by its success. We can never escape the risks of faith, can never hold back and refuse to move till we are sure of our footing ; so to hold back is never to begin. Everywhere faith makes its awful demand ; everywhere we walk not in ourselves, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit ; in all things we must believe that we have, in order to receive. Not even reason itself can escape the imperative call. It, too, must make its leap in the dark. It, too, must surrender itself to the violence of an irresistible hope.'[1]

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[1] Macmurray, in *Adventure*, p. 37.

Scientific knowledge is built on faith. The scientist believes in the rationality of the universe, in spite of all its mysteries and seeming contradictions : he believes that truth *can* be discovered, and he goes forward in that faith. And the way of knowledge is one of the ways to God : we have only to go far enough and we shall find Him ; but for this we must be willing to explore all the possible avenues of approach. Science is more willing to-day to recognize that, whilst its method is unimpeachable, based on the postulate of the universe as a closed mechanical system, this is only one way of approach to Reality. The more it explores the wonders of that system, the more evident it becomes that the system itself cannot be accounted for by anything within the system, nor by the sum of its parts ; as Lloyd Morgan puts it, it must ' acknowledge ' God. In fact, the postulate of complete rationality is a postulate at the same time of purpose, of one grand purpose embracing the whole, and greater than the whole ; and that is really the postulate of God.

Faith is the latent principle upon which the whole structure of human society has been built. Without it there would have been nothing to bind society into any sort of unity. Self-interest is merely disruptive ; it breeds suspicions and fears. The more society is developed, the easier it is to see the importance of faith to its well-being : it is implicit everywhere. We cannot take a railway journey without trusting the fidelity of the men who constructed the engine and carriages, of the men who drive the train, of the men who inspect the line, of the scores of signal-men all along the route. Commerce is built upon faith. Our international banking system would collapse at once without it. Our troubles in the relations of capital and labour are due to want of faith. War itself arises out of mutual fears and suspicions, and the disruptive operation of selfishness. Every advance we make in the conquest of these secular evils is a triumph of faith.

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[1] Holland, *The Philosophy of Faith*, p. 27.

The foundation of our whole social order is family life ; and here also faith is the condition of well-being, and we can see its creative function very plainly. When two young people fall in love, we have a natural and providential situation in which there is a special vision of beauty and attractiveness where faith acts at its highest capacity. Though the first glamour may pass, faith takes on a renewed power in the conjoint work of life, always supplying encouragement amidst its conflicts and difficulties. Here we can see faith in its character of creative adventure, daring great things, and winning great things from life. This faith inspires the love, and, truly understood, carries us straight to God. Mark Rutherford says, ' In the love of woman to the man who is of no account God has provided us with a true testimony of what is in His own heart. I often felt this when looking at myself and at Helen. " What is there in me ? " I have said ; " is she not the victim of some self-created deception ? " and I was wretched till I considered that in her I saw the Divine Nature itself, and that her passion was a stream straight from the Highest.' When, after long misunderstanding, he discovered the true quality of his own little daughter, he speaks thus, ' My love to Marie was love of God Himself as He is—an unrestrained adoration of an afflux from Him, adoration transfigured into love, because the revelation had clothed itself in a child's form. . . . I had seen the Kingdom of God through a little child.'[1] Here faith is seen as the way to love, enabling Providence to perfect our human lives in relation one to another.

Faith enters into the very texture of the moral life. The essence of duty is to choose the right, however difficult and painful it may be, because we believe that otherwise we are disloyal to our true nature, and ultimately because we believe that goodness is bound up with the very nature of things, and that conscience is in touch with the divine Goodness itself, alluring us along the right path of life. So at length we come to make duty our delight : morality is merged in religion. We follow in the footsteps of Him who said, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me,' of Him who, 'for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising shame.' This perfect faith, even in the presence of disaster, transmutes duty into joy. Here Providence is seen in grace, meeting our every moral need. 'Life must always be a great adventure, with risks on every hand ; a clear-sighted eye, a many-sided sympathy, a fine daring, an endless patience, are ever necessary to all good living. With such qualities alone may the artist in life reach success.'[2]

RELIGIOUS FAITH

Religion is the greatest adventure of all ; and here faith is tested to the utmost, and wins its greatest victories. It is especially in connexion with religion that faith is stigmatized as something irrational ; although elsewhere it is taken for granted without criticism. Life for all of us is a journey through an unknown country ; and religion offers us a way and a Guide. We have what James calls a 'forced option,' we may accept the offer or decline it ; but one of the two courses we must take. If we let the matter alone, we are really choosing life without a Guide. I do not say this means that we are altogether ‘ exiled from the eternal providence ’ ; for wherever there is faith of any sort, God can do a little ; but we run the risk of going very far astray, of losing the best things, here and hereafter.

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[1] Mark Rutherford's *Deliverance*, pp. 109, 125.

[2] Streeter, in *Adventure*, p. 60, quoting Ellis, *The Dance of Life*, p. 263.

The naturalism of to-day, which is virtually atheism, makes the assumption that the closed system which suffices for science is the final truth about Reality ; and religious faith is excluded. The fact is, the scientist makes at the outset one great postulate of faith, and then forgets all about it. He puts his experience into the system, and leaves himself outside ; so that the system has not got in it any fundamental reality at all. The faith that is the actual condition of there being any system for him is calmly ignored. Well, if we must criticize, let us at least criticize our own unbelief. If Haeckel’s God of ‘ glue and phosphorus ’ is all that science can offer us, so much the worse for science. But if faith is really fundamental for science, still more is it for life and conduct, which, after all, are greater things than science. The point I should like to make is this, that, if science realized better the importance of faith in her own special sphere, she might look upon it with greater sympathy in other regions.

There are two ways of seeking truth, the one, which Bowne calls the ‘ method of rigour and vigour,’ proceeds according to Clifford’s dictum : ‘ It is wrong always, everywhere, and for every man, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.’ This means, in practice, to doubt everything that can be doubted ; and whatever cannot be squeezed into the system of a purely formal and verbal logic cannot be true. This is the will-to-disbelieve ; and, though it may have some value for criticism, it has none at all for constructive thought. In science all progress is by means of hypotheses. This means that the scientist believes in certain facts he does not see, and sets to work to find them. Sometimes he does not find them, and then he gives up the hypothesis ; but more often he does find them. His faith has not created the facts, but it has made it possible for him to discover the facts. Here nature, we may say, has revealed itself to him in response to his faith. This is not the method of initial doubt : rather, the scientist says, ' This is impossible, but I believe it to be true '—and he finds it true. On these lines, we believe as much as we reasonably can, and doubt nothing except for reasons.

When we come to the realm of practical life and conduct, the sceptical attitude becomes merely stupid : it has always been adopted by prejudice. Stephenson was told that, if men could be hurtled through the air at forty miles an hour, they would be asphyxiated. Not long ago we were being assured that, whatever else men might achieve, they could never make machines that would fly. But there were people who obstinately believed that they *could* be made, and they *were* made.

In the realm of personal relations faith is of critical importance. As faith inspires the highest courage, it informs the truest love ; and its action is creative. Faith in another brings out all the latent power of goodness in him ; whilst distrust seals up all the springs of goodness, and creates evil. When the ex-convict Jean Valjean came to Bishop Myriel's house, after being brutally repulsed elsewhere, he was most graciously received ; and the Bishop told him, ' Whatever is here is yours.' This was taken to be a polite nothing ; and when in the night Jean took away the silver plates, of course he was stealing them. Next morning the gendarmes brought back the thief and the plates ; but the Bishop, instead of claiming the plates, brought out the precious silver candlesticks, and asked Jean why he had left them behind. And, apart, to Jean he said, ' It is your soul I am buying for you—and I give it to God.' This is the faith that annihilates whole mountains of evil. It is very conspicuous in the life of Jesus. In the wavering, impulsive Simon, He saw the possibilities of abiding strength, and re-named him the Rock. At the Pharisee's house, where the woman anointed his feet, the host said that if Jesus had known what sort of woman she was He would not have allowed it. The Pharisee saw the actual worst; but Jesus saw the possible best, and called it into being. So Jesus was the *friend* of publicans and sinners. This was not merely pity nor condescension; it was genuine understanding. He could not bear to see such possibilities going to waste; and by His faith-inspired kindness He made them into realities. This potent operation of faith is a most important element in the providential order. As it works from man to man, it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. And how much more may it effect as between the Father and His children! Here our poor faith is met by His overwhelming kindness, which is present in all His guidance of us. Faith, which accepts the universe as coherent and intelligible in spite of all obstacles, and accepts humanity as good and lovable, in spite of still greater contradictions, takes its greatest venture when it accepts God as Creator and Father. Here, evidently, the adventure of faith is more dangerous; the unknown and unknowable here assumes vast proportions. Are we to put first the will-to-believe or the will-to-disbelieve?

Starting from experience, we shall do well not to rate the physical as comparable in value with the spiritual elements of experience. We shall prefer to take the highest experiences of the noblest persons as our guide, rather than the average experiences of the average man. At least we may be clear about this, that if there is a God, we shall only get into relations of any sort with Him by faith; for this is the law of all knowledge and practical activity. If we will not believe, for us there will be nothing here to believe. But if we want to believe—and surely rational men would *like* to believe in a God—at least we can take the hypothesis, and see where it will lead us. If at any point it fails us, we can always give it up. We have the idea of God ; and we can test all our experience by it. We might find that it explains the physical universe better than any other idea, and so is our surest guide to final truth in science. We have the fact of conscience and the moral life of man. We might find that, if God is behind that, we have in human love and goodness values that are eternal. Human personality is a precious reality ; and only if there is a God has it any ultimate worth. We have the facts of religion ; and we might take religion at its highest and best, and inquire how it works. We have the fact of Jesus, the most perfect exponent of religion of all time ; and we might study the meaning of faith as it worked in His life, and ask ourselves whether it might not be worth while to make such a venture of faith as He made.

On the general relations of faith to religion, I will add the following sentences from the work of Scott Holland already referred to : ' Our secular and scientific life is an immense experiment in faith—an experiment which verifies itself by success, but which justifies itself only if it remembers to attribute all its success to the reality of that hidden relationship to God, which is the key to all its capacities, the justification of all its confidence, and the security of all its advance.' ' We stand by the necessities of our existence, in the relationship of sons to a Father, who has poured out into us and still pours the vigour of His own life. This is the basis of all faith. Unless this relationship exists, there could be no faith ; if it exists, then faith is its essential corollary : it is bound to appear.' ' All our life is a discovery, a disclosure, of this secret.'[1]

[1] Holland, *The Philosophy of Faith*, pp. 28, 29.

Jesus the Exponent of Faith

In Hebrews, Jesus is spoken of as the Captain and perfecter of faith ; and, to understand what faith at its highest can be, we must study His life and teaching. Always He looked for faith ; and without it He could do nothing. He could not do many mighty works at Nazareth because of unbelief. To the distracted father He said, ‘ If thou canst ? All things are possible to him that believeth.’ To active faith He was always gladly responsive : ‘ O woman, great is thy faith ; be it done unto thee even as thou wilt.’ He was careful to remove possible errors in relation to His healing power. His words to the woman who touched His clothes were to make it clear that it was her faith, and that alone, that had secured His blessing. His words to the man sick of the palsy are amongst the most remarkable that have been recorded : ‘ Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.’ How could the supreme gift of all be given, even in part, through another’s faith ? But when faith opens the door only a little way, God can come in to bless both body and soul. Grace is conditioned by faith ; but it may abound beyond faith’s measure to an unknown extent : ‘ If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible to you.’

Respecting the faith of Jesus Himself, as we see it working in His life, Cairns says, ‘ The faith of Jesus in the Almighty Father, like all faith, is woven of three strands—faith in God’s power and reality, faith in His love, and faith in His perfect liberty to help men.’[1] ‘ With God,’ Jesus said, ‘ all things are possible.’ He meant, of course, all things that accord with His character ; but at least that nothing can finally frustrate the purposes of His grace for any man. The omnipotence of God did not mean, for Jesus, that God was the 'wholly other,' inscrutable, unknowable; rather His power was the very Presence in which Jesus always lived, which was always available for His children's good. So Paul said, 'I can do everything in the strength of Him who makes me strong.' For Jesus, evidently, this power moved as freely in the physical world as anywhere else; and we remember that He said, at the end, 'All power is given unto *Me*, in heaven and on earth.'

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[1] Cairns, *The Faith That Rebels*, p. 217.

Faith in God's love inspired all the work of Jesus for men. This He meant when He said He had come to seek and save the lost. This He demonstrated in His acts of mercy, in healing the sick, and casting out demons, in feeding the hungry and raising the dead, and in forgiving sins. This is the great lesson of the Cross, the supreme witness of self-denying love. Here love of God and love of men are equally manifested. If God asked for even this, and man's salvation required it, love could not hesitate; it must give all. And in the love of Christ we see God's love perfectly displayed. In giving us Christ, He gives us all things. To His own generation, our Lord's resurrection was the sign and seal of love's victory; and to us also, if we know what love means.

The effectiveness of Providence is at its highest only in the sphere of the religious life, where faith is working through love. Christian people need to remind themselves that all the powers and principles actuating the wonderful redemptive ministry of our Lord on earth are available for us to-day. If in any measure His grace is thwarted to-day, it is because of our unbelief. Faith in God's perfect liberty to help men we must hold fast. That liberty implies (to quote Cairns) 'His power to intervene in the ordinary course of events, to act creatively whenever the real spiritual interest of His children requires it.' And he adds, 'The weakening of this is, perhaps, what to-day hampers Faith more than any other cause. The shadow of the "closed system" falls upon prayer, obsesses men's imagination and limits their hopes. The world becomes rigid. The glove of silk becomes a glove of stone.'[1]

The Lord of heaven and earth guides His people to-day, in response to faith and prayer, and blesses all their service of love, and is waiting to put the world at their feet. We return once again to the significance of our Lord's miracles. They were never wrought for any personal benefit, nor for any proof of power. They were part of the work of God in the blessing of men, both body and soul, and were a foretaste of the ideal order in which the whole creation would share with man in full redemption. For one who was perfectly attuned to the will of God, there could be no question of exercising power in any erratic way, nor would there be any hesitation in using it when it *was* needed; it was ever-present, and available through faith and prayer. Hogg says, 'In the real cosmic order there must always exist an unexhausted margin of Divine energy beyond what our knowledge at any time has discovered and construed as the order of nature.'[2] I fear that to-day we are liable to forget all about that 'unexhausted margin.' By faith we may realize that we live in a friendly universe. We may find there

A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

As Wordsworth says, we have become too sophisticated:

Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.

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[1] Cairns, *The Faith that Rebels*, p. 222.

[2] Hogg, *Redemption From This World*, pp. 212, 213.

How often nature has been the direct medium of God's revelation of Himself. To Jeremiah an almond-tree in blossom was a message from God. To Brother Lawrence a bare tree in winter spoke of God's renewing grace. To Fechner the earth itself was literally alive, 'our great common guardian angel, who watches over all our interests combined,' an angel, 'rich and fresh and flower-like.' For many, there is a direct experience of God in nature, as authentic as that of any of the great mystics whose aim is to sever themselves as completely as possible from all things sensuous. Certainly Jesus had this direct apprehension of God in nature. God makes *His* sun to shine upon the evil and the good, He clothes the flowers in beauty, He marks the sparrow's fall.

For Jesus, the material order is under free divine control for the sake of His children ; and by prayer its course can be determined for their good. We recognize that Jesus had a quite unique power ; and know that such power is not, and could not be, in the hands of ordinary men and women, at least as things are now.[1] But let us not measure all possibilities by ourselves. Even now, in the case of men and women of exceptional spiritual responsiveness, things do happen in the physical world that are outside common experience. What happens in such lives may be prophetic of an increasing freedom when ordinary people have attained to a higher quality of faith. Least of all must we think of God's care for the individual as limited to the application of a machine-like set of rules. We may find it extremely difficult to understand *how* He works ; but constantly, when we are seeking His guidance, often in the midst of a most complicated set of circumstances, we can see with the most vivid clearness that He is *there*. So 'while we may well care little whether what has actually transpired be supernatural or only providential, it is of supreme importance to maintain the constant, permanent *possibility* of the supernatural. For only the assurance that the measure of the practicable is never past experience, but is always God's call, can redeem us from the anxieties of the worldly-wise to a fearless life of fellowship with Christ in ever fresh adventures of faith.'[1]

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[1] See also pp. 104, 105 ; 108, 109.

In the Hebrews, faith is presented as the courageous adventure of those whose hearts are set on the things eternal. For them, life is a very stern conflict ; but they have as leader the great Captain who has been faith's perfect example ; and in His victory their's is assured. Here faith is seen overcoming the obstacles it must inevitably meet. But this is rather too diluted a statement of the situation. The Jewish Christians addressed are facing a very serious crisis, involving probably death itself, the final test of fidelity. They are encouraged to follow their Captain, bearing His reproach, and understanding that His humiliation and shameful death were, through the spirit in which He accepted them, the very crown of human glory. For Him, the faith that dared all and surrendered all made His death the guarantee for the salvation of all men. The Captain of Salvation was a willing partaker of our infirmities, and was tempted in all ways as we are ; and so became our perfect Mediator. His faith not merely conquered in spite of suffering and humiliation and death, but transmuted them into redemptive power. And as with Him, so it is with us ; suffering accepted is a means by which God's grace can work freely both for ourselves and others. This is the greatest victory of faith ; it is the channel of God's best gifts to man.

I think there can be no doubt that the Church of Christ has lost powers that it once had, and might recover. Harnack has said, ' As the proof of the spirit and of power subsided after the beginning of the third century, the extraordinary moral tension also became relaxed, paving the way gradually for a morality which was adapted to a worldly life.'[1] Certainly to-day we are not shaking and startling the world, and we never shall, without faith of a more daring quality.

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[1] Hogg, *Redemption From This World*, p. 239.

If we have faith, we shall meet the response of love, both in the universe and in the hearts of men. Give your best in the way of love, 'and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, heaped up, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.' If we have faith in Jesus as the Way to the Father, faith truly to follow Him, we shall not be disappointed ; He will bring us to God, and God to us. The greatest hindrance always is that men *will not* really take Jesus seriously. They fight shy of the Church, and of theology, for which, perhaps, they can be excused ; but there can be no excuse for not listening to *Him.* We are told that He is held in honour by very many who make no profession of religion ; but what sort of honour is that ? If they would only attend, and look, and listen, if they would honestly try to grasp the meaning of His life, surely they would follow ; and no one ever truly followed in vain. A saying of Jesus, given as from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, is this, 'Let not him who seeks . . . cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished, and astonished he shall reign, and reigning he shall rest.' Faith's adventure brings us to amazing discoveries and ever onward, into realms of power and peace. The response of Jesus Christ to our faith means not only that we get light and courage and patience, and all sorts of gifts and helps as we need them along the way of life. He gives Himself, who is the Way and the Truth, and the Life. He dwells in our hearts by faith ; His very life is communicated to us. As He loved, we may love ; as He endured, we may endure ; as He served, we may serve ; as He conquered, we may conquer. All our will is lifted up to the measure of His almighty power and grace. Nothing less is meant by Paul's great prayer that we might be ' filled unto all the fullness of God.'

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[1] Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 268.

Since, Lord, Thou dost defend
Us with Thy Spirit,
We know we at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away !
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

X

THE FUNCTION OF PAIN

In a study of Providence the presence of pain in the world is a fact very difficult to deal with, not perhaps so much on the theoretical as on the practical side. There are personal tragedies of pain before which we are dumb with silence. But if we feel that it is futile to try to comfort sufferers in such circumstances with arguments, on the other hand we must bear in mind that these cases are not typical, and may not be used, off-hand, to arraign the moral order outright. A great many people have practically had no pain all their lives ; and usually where it does come, it is but a brief episode. The criticisms of Providence on this account do not often come from the sufferers themselves, but from thinkers who are taking a very external and one-sided view of things.

Physical Pain and Death

It is difficult to discuss the subject, because it is so much involved with others nearly akin. Pain, pure and simple, is a sensation, and as such, is a specialized function of a nervous system. Every living creature has some sensitiveness to its surroundings, by means of which it seeks the good and avoids the evil ; but pain seems properly to belong only to such organisms as have a brain with its central control over all movements. Plants have something analogous to a nervous system ; but we should not regard them as capable of pain. Insects, with no proper brain, have a highly organized nervous system, but probably no sense of pain. However, this is a matter for physiology. At least, what we know at present hardly points in that direction. But we are justified in thinking that all creatures which have a brain and a nervous system physiologically similar to that of human beings are equipped with a pain-apparatus which functions in the same way. If a cat's paw or a human finger happen to touch a piece of hot iron, the limb is instantly and automatically drawn away from it. The use of the sensation is plainly to safeguard the organism from injury ; and for this purpose it is a highly efficient method. A complex and delicate physical organism could not exist at all without some such safeguard ; and to speak of it as a ' crude and cruel method ' of teaching us to guard against the perils which surround us is not justifiable. ' Pain is life's preservative. It is Nature's warning bell, and tells of either actual injury or coming danger which, if not heeded, would result in the destruction of the whole organism '[1]

As a specialized function of the nervous system, it has to be taken along with all the other special functions of that system—the apparatus for seeing and hearing and tasting and smelling, and for all controlled movement, besides the endless internal balancings and adjustings which make the bodies of animals such miracles of design. The same system which gives the possibility of pain, gives the power of sight and hearing, and endless capacity for control of our surroundings ; and the system must be judged as a whole. It is probably the best possible under the given conditions. It was Helmholtz who pointed out that the human eye, as an optical instrument, had quite a number of faults and flaws ; but then went on to say that as an organ of vision it could not be bettered.

[1] Ballard, *Christian Theism Justified*, pp. 181, 182.

Now if any one criticizes the Creator for the way in which He has ordered sentient life, it is hardly allowable to smother such criticism by saying that since God *must* be good, and has certainly ordained pain, it therefore cannot be an evil. It might be at once replied that pain *is* an evil, and therefore refutes His goodness. We must look carefully at the facts themselves, which show that certainly pain has a purpose quite well defined, and apparently absolutely necessary to the welfare of the higher organisms. It cannot be set down as an evil unless it can be shown that it does not effect that for which it was designed, as for instance, that it works in a very uncertain and haphazard way, and results in an actual amount and intensity of pain out of all proportion to the good results secured, and especially that in human life it has issued in one great tragedy.

In modern times the operation of pain in the animal world has attracted a great deal of attention, and has been a serious difficulty to many. Nature, by arm-chair philosophers chiefly, and as far as I know, never by those who have lived with animals in the open, and have been in close touch with wild life, has been described as one vast shambles, with cruelty dominant everywhere, everywhere the slayer and the slain. Griffith-Jones, in his work on *Providence, Human and Divine*, gives a good deal of attention to this matter, and he quotes Wallace, who says, 'The supposed "torments" and "miseries" of animals have little real existence, but are the reflections of the imagined sensations of cultivated men and women in similar circumstances, and the amount of suffering caused by the struggle for existence among animals is quite insignificant.'[1] The result upon the whole 'seems unquestionably the production of the largest number of healthy and happy specimens of each species that can find a place in her (nature's) economy.'[1]

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[1] Wallace, *Darwinism*, p. 37.

We have also to remember that mutual aid is as far-reaching in its extent as competitive strife, and that parental care is another altruistic factor everywhere at work in animal life. It is the gregarious and non-carnivorous animals that appear to succeed the best.

Descartes, in an elaborate argument, tried to prove that animals were merely automata, and so felt no pain. Even quite recently Kay Robinson, in *The Religion of Nature*, practically revived this argument. His point is that the absence of self-consciousness in the animal world excludes pain. There is reflex action upon contact with hurtful things, and all the signs of pain, but no actual suffering. But he is trying to prove too much. With the same sort of nervous system there is probably the same capacity for pain-sensation, though to a less extent than in man. But it is important to notice how much self-consciousness intensifies pain. For us, memory and imagination play a very much larger part than in animal life ; and we have the habit of magnifying pain by anticipation to an enormous extent. Also with the increase of intelligence there seems to have come a heightened sensitiveness ; so that it is frequently noticed how much more a civilized man feels pain than a savage. We conclude that in the animal world pain effects its purpose in the most restrained and effective way possible.

What really suggests the idea of cruelty in the animal world seems to be the fact of death, nearly always a sudden and violent death ; and pain stands in very close relation to physical death. The ordinance of death is itself a condition of progress in the world of animate life as a whole, and no less in the mundane human sphere. Without it, we could not possibly have had the rich succession of new and higher types that have marked the history of life on our planet. 'No death would soon mean no birth. Those in possession would prevent new-comers from trenching on their domain. Thus life with its blessings would be confined to the few, instead of being distributed to many swiftly succeeding generations. In such a world progress would be inconceivably difficult.'[1]

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[1] Griffith-Jones, *Providence, Human and Divine*, pp. 234 f.

But if the reign of death is thus beneficent, we can see at least that the function of carnivorism amongst lower creatures is to eliminate the possibility of all nature being choked by the decaying bodies of dead organisms. It also provides that the maximum of possible forms of life may flourish, and may use up in the most economical way all the food-supplies of nature. We may think we could arrange things better ; but in face of the intricacy of the problem, it is advisable to let well alone.

We may protest against the violence of the ending for most creatures, and call it cruel ; but in the vast majority of cases there is no pain involved at all ; and there is no such thing as cruelty from one animal to another. The beneficent function of pain is clearly manifested in this connexion ; for its sphere is strictly limited. It is a warning and a safeguard against the lesser and most curable disturbances of the organism. When some great crash comes, likely to be fatal, pain is rarely felt ; the whole nervous system is thrown out of gear. 'In sudden accidents, just as in the case of seizure by wild animals, there is a natural and merciful process of nervous inhibition which acts as a perfect anaesthetic.'[2] When Livingstone was seized by a lion, he felt no pain. Had he then died, there would have been no pain at all. In the process of recovery there was pain, but now on a bearable scale. Evidence of the same kind is to be had in abundance, and justifies us in thinking that the death of wild animals is practically always painless. Their life is lived in full vigour ; and they rarely have to endure the physical disabilities of old age.

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[1] Peake, *Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, p. 138. Quoted by Ballard, op. cit., p. 157.

[2] Ballard, *Christian Theism Justified*, p. 177.

It is sometimes stated that wild animals are immune from disease. This is not the case : they are liable to epidemics and other types of disease, though to a greatly less extent than human beings. Undoubtedly domestic plants and animals are much more subject to disease than wild ones, and the reason is obvious. They are artificially sheltered from the severe conditions that in nature make for health and eliminate the weak. Inbreeding also lessens their power of resistance to disease.

Really, as James points out in his essay, *Is Life Worth Living ?* the fierce outcry against the cruelty of nature has at the back of it an insistent demand that there *ought* to be beneficence at the heart of all things. What is mistaken is the hasty judgement that the facts of nature frustrate this demand. At the same time James is right in saying that ' if there be a divine Spirit of the universe, Nature, such as we know her, cannot be its *ultimate word* to man.'[1] This will appear plainly when we follow up the operation of pain in human life.

Pain in Human Life

In human life we have to bring in at once the relation of pain to moral and spiritual issues. We have now to do with pain in the form of disease occurring on an altogether greater scale than in the lower realm of animate life. We have also not merely the general question, but the rights and claims of the individual person to deal with ; and there is the difficulty of accepting the divine goodness in face of those great disasters in which multitudes of people, old and young together, are involved. ' To be told that the sum of human happiness exceeds the individual ills, is no consolation to those who feel that a world of rapture could not atone for one crushed or wasted life, nor explain it nor reconcile us with the scheme that admitted of it.'[1]

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[1] James, *The Will to Believe*, p. 44. Cf. Otto, op cit., pp. 279 f., English trans., pp. 360 f.

At the same time, we must approach the individual problem by a survey of the whole field ; and here the question of the actual proportion of pain in human life stands first. Sir Frederick Treves has said, ' The popular view of disease as a calamity is altogether erroneous, for its phenomena or symptoms are marked by a purpose, and that purpose is beneficent. The processes of disease aim, not at the destruction of life, but at the saving of it. If it were not for disease, in the popular sense, human life would soon be extinct. He who grumbles about a cold is finding fault with the measure of relief to which he owes his life.'[2]

That pain is not a clumsy and ill-regulated factor in human life is shown by its *relatively* infrequent occurrence. Ballard, in a most valuable little study, has called attention to the ' Mystery of Painlessness.' He goes in a rapid survey over the various parts of the human body, heart, brain, lungs, eyes, and other organs, and shows what countless millions of adjustments are continually in action, the derangement of any of which would cause pain, of which, nevertheless, we are as a rule blissfully unconscious. ' With the average man, the ordinary blessed unconsciousness of his body, the painlessness which sets him free to use all his thoughts and energies in the multitudinous directions of a day's work, whether with hand or brain, is naturally and universally forgotten.'[3] ' He daily thinks, feels, wills, estimates, calculates, hears, speaks, decides, without even for a moment asking how he so demonstrates his sanity and intelligence—until he gets a headache ; and then this mystery of brief pain makes him completely oblivious to the preceding greater mystery of painlessness.'[1] Ballard again says, ' In the large city where these words are written, there are some half a million individuals. But there are not fifty thousand invalids. That is to say, nine out of every ten are in possession of what we term sound health.'[2]

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[1] Hardy, *Gospel of Pain*, p. 37. Quoted by Ballard, op. cit., p. 132.

[2] Ballard, *Christian Theism Justified*, p. 171.

[3] Ballard, *The Mystery of Painlessness*, p. 19.

For the vast majority of people, sickness takes up a very insignificant portion of their life. During Gladstone's last illness, a friend said to him sympathetically, ' I am afraid, Mr. Gladstone, you must have suffered much pain these last six months.' To which he replied, ' Indeed I have, but that is no reason why I should forget that I have had twice eighty-six times six months of merciful painlessness.'[3] Ballard concludes, ' No one with a heart will deny the reality and the poignancy of the mystery of pain, alike as to its extent and intensity. But no one with a head, viewing fairly the whole realm of human existence, can contradict the estimate that it sinks into comparative insignificance beside this boundless, ceaseless mystery of painlessness, which prevails throughout all nature, and means most of all in and through human nature.'[4]

Not the least of the wonders of our physical organism is the provision made in the blood for defence against all the germs that bring disease. Another, equally great, is the power of self-healing possessed by the tissues of the body, and generally the capacity for concentrating all the resources of the organism upon any weak or menaced part, the *vis medicatrix naturae*.

We must also remember the great progress made in our own time in the conquest of disease. A child born in England to-day has an expectation of twelve years more of life than our grandfathers had. Sir Ray Lankester has said that by the thoroughgoing application of our present knowledge and technique, all epidemic disease could be abolished within fifty years. In short, obey the laws of health and you will *have* health. The body is made for health, and normally it is healthy and free from pain.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 32.
[2] Ballard, *Christian Theism Justified*, p. 172.
[3] Op. cit., p. 187.
[4] Ballard, *The Mystery of Painlessness*, p. 54.

In human life, knowledge and imagination greatly enhance the capacity for pain ; but then they also, to an immeasurably greater extent, enhance the capacity for enjoyment. 'The capacity of thought takes up into it all the elements of our experience, and gives them a boundless spiritual extension : and if, in this enlargement, there is any change in their proportions, it is that the ideal forms rather soften the shadows and glorify the lights : so that the inner life is sweeter than the outer, and supplies the truest balm for the wounds of the actual.'[1]

In all estimates of the place of pain in human life moral factors are of the first importance. We know that by far the greatest proportion of disease is directly or indirectly due to intemperance and lust and greed, on the one hand, and to culpable ignorance and indifference on the other ; and where the results of these fall, as so often they do, upon innocent victims, we have the moral factor of human solidarity : we are members one of another. All this is preventable suffering ; and its conquest is the great moral task of our race. Into this connexion we must bring the untold havoc wrought by war. We are still being told that war is natural to human life, and will never be eliminated ; but this is false, whether we consider it as a biological or as an ethical problem. War is national sin ; and the moral responsibility of nations is as real as that of individuals. There is nothing more certain than that war *can* be eliminated from our common life, and with it all its evils.

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[1] Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, vol. ii., p. 98.

One class of suffering is largely beyond human control, and that comprises those great disasters which are due to unforeseen accidents, such as the loss of the *Titanic*, or to cataclysms such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In these cases what so forcibly strikes the imagination is the suddenness of the calamity and the numbers simultaneously involved. We are appalled at the loss of life in the Great War ; but we hardly give a thought to the fact that in the epidemic of influenza that swept over a great part of the world soon after it, probably more people lost their lives, and in a much shorter period of time. But the mere fact of numbers makes no real difference to the problem. If such things are possible to one, the fact that many are simultaneously involved does not necessarily increase the difficulty. We need, in the end, to justify the suffering of the individual, if we are to see light.

In great physical disasters from earthquakes and volcanoes we have very local and occasional occurrences whose explanation is well known. These occur in certain well-defined belts where the earth's crust is more or less unstable. They constitute a sort of cosmic safety-valve, and they are the security for the equable and stable conditions that hold over all the rest of the world. We may say then that the victims of these disasters are the vicarious sufferers for the sake of the immunity which the rest of the inhabitants of the world enjoy. Even here there is a measure of human control. It may be said that people have no business to live at all where such things may happen ; but they are so infrequent in any generation, and men have such an obstinate clinging to their native soil, and often no means of migrating to a safer place, that no great blame can be apportioned. Still, when men take known risks they are so far responsible. In our day, at least, Governments are doing something to guard against the worst risks.

In the case of earthquakes, human control takes the form of devising such methods of building, and the use of such materials, as to reduce the dangers very considerably. Where this is not done, man is responsible. 'The Japanese committee of experts sent to investigate the San Francisco earthquake reported, by Dr. Nakamura, Professor of Architecture at Tokio University, that dishonest *mortar*—a corrupt agglomeration of sea-sand and lime—was responsible for nearly all the damage wrought.'[1] This is suggestive; for 'dishonest mortar,' bad principles of cohesion, are the cause of many disasters in the human sphere.

The case of the great numbers of those who fall victims to an epidemic, or to disease inherited from their parents, is the same in principle. Here also we are members one of another, and our deliverance from the grip of disease can only come through the moral elevation of the whole race. In things physical as well as spiritual there is no full redemption for the highest apart from the lowest. This is a severe necessity, but it is also an incentive to the more vigorous action of those who know and those who care, towards the conquest of these remedial ills. Here the innocent must share the common burden of disease until goodness and knowledge win the day.

Pain and Moral Progress

When we reach the higher levels of life we have to enlarge our conception of pain. It is no longer merely physical. It includes all those types of suffering that are connected with the painfulness of moral effort, the shadows cast over the life of love, pain caused by the unkindness and injustice of men, the anguish of affections betrayed or unrequited, the sorrows of those who grieve over the sins of others and are labouring for their redemption. These are far too various even to be enumerated ; but, as it has been maintained with regard to physical pain, they have all a gracious meaning and purpose. They belong to the lifelong battle in which all are called to take their part, in order to achieve the highest, and to overcome evil with good.

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[1] Ballard, *Christian Theism Justified*, p. 178.

To estimate aright the high value of pain as a condition of moral progress under the conditions of our earthly life would require a volume to itself. Pain is involved at some point in all moral effort. The way of duty is never easy, often positively painful. The path of life is narrow ; and to reach the goal we must resist many allurements to turn to the right hand or to the left, and there are many difficulties to overcome. Martineau says, ' The very elements that make up the cases of duty are, thus, in innumerable instances relative to the presence of suffering, and, in its absence, would themselves disappear. And so the maxim of Richard Rothe is verified : that " in this world all Good, even the fairest and noblest—as Love—rests upon a ' dark ground,' which it has to consume with pain and convert into pure spirit." '[1] Suffering is the school of all the virtues. ' If in the darkness of the mystery of suffering we do not see the Divine face, we ought at least to see the lamp of human virtue. Take suffering out of the world, and what is left of heroism, and patience, and self-sacrifice ? '[2]

Those whom we call heroes are men who burn their boats, cut themselves off from their base, venture into the unknown with all its perils and uncertainties, attempt the impossible, not even counting on success, but resolved at least to be worthy of it. We think of Nansen and Scott and the heroes of Mount Everest ; and they deserve all the honour we can give them. But there is surely a greater heroism, all unaware of itself, in the lives of a labouring man and his wife, who face day by day the drudgery of hard toil, with very few reliefs or pleasures, always living on the borders of want, with very few resources to meet sickness, liable to be thrown out of work at any moment, yet going on cheerfully without fear or self-pity, taking it all pretty much as a matter of course. Here is the patience and the faith of the ordinary man.

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[1] Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, vol. ii., p. 100.

[2] Ballard, *Christian Theism Justified*, p. 185, quoting Hall Caine.

Pain is not only a condition of the moral achievement of the individual, it is at the root of all social progress ; its highest products are sympathy and vicarious suffering. ‘ Few things can so inspire and re-create the human heart as can the spectacle of crushing misfortune cheerfully and heroically borne ; and the unconscious influence which those who do this exert is far greater than they or others comprehend.’[1] It is a great thing when a man can realize for himself this creative value in his own sorrows, when he can say, ‘ All said and done, I am glad that in the great tragedy of humanity I have borne my part ; I am glad that I have tasted the cup which is the heritage of man.’[2] So, in the unspeakable miseries and sordid filth of the trenches in Flanders, many a man said, ‘ I would not have missed it for worlds.’ ‘ Pain, not just submitted to but willingly accepted, makes the sufferer socially creative. A man counts in the world to the extent that he has thought and felt in the right way. Suffering rightly borne is constructive work. He who has “borne his bit” has also “done his bit,” and pain conquered is power.’[3]

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[1] Streeter, *God and the Struggle for Existence*, p. 172.

[2] Op. cit., p. 175.

[3] Op. cit., p. 173.

It is not the lotus-eaters who have blessed the world. The rich and healthy are often inordinately selfish ; but from the sick-chamber of some life-long invalid often light has been radiated through the whole neighbourhood. It is through pain more than through pleasure that society has been knit together in mutual service. One touch of suffering makes the whole world kin. Those who have known loss can heal the wounds of others in like case.

In vicarious suffering we not only suffer *with* others, but *for* them. For the sake of her children a mother accepts the risks and sufferings of motherhood ; and her love counts no gift and no sacrifice as anything but joy, while life lasts. For the sake of those who are defrauded of the best things of life, the reformer accepts hatred and opposition, very often from the very people he is trying to help. For us men and for our salvation, Jesus endured the cross, despising shame. He 'was numbered with the transgressors : yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' 'Vicarious suffering is not an arbitrary contrivance by which Christ bought a formal pardon for a sinful world. It is the price which some one must pay for every step of progress and every conquest over evil the world shall ever gain.'[1] And so, we conclude, 'it is impossible to hold that suffering *per se* is a radical evil in a world where the Cross is at once the perfect climax of human devotion and the profoundest revelation of divine love.'[2]

The heroes of the spiritual life have to bear a unique order of suffering. They are not like the great adventurers upon whom all the world looks with admiration ; they have to stand *against* those whom they love and want to bless : Athanasius 'against the world,' Luther against the hierarchy of Rome, Wesley against the religious world of his day, Christ against His own people. The injustice and hatred they have to face often comes from those who think they are doing God service. And this is accepted without rancour ; because the great pioneer believes that even if he dies and seems to fail, his death will be not loss but gain ; and the hearts of men will be won to the higher truth. So pain in its acutest conceivable form is transmuted into saving grace. It is such suffering that is creative of the highest values of life. In this we come nearest to the heart of Reality itself. Herein we are to the fullest extent workers together with God, who Himself shares in the suffering and inspires His servants to this uttermost endurance and unconquerable faith.

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[1] Hyde, *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 228. Quoted by Griffith-Jones, *Providence, Human and Divine*, p. 251.

[2] Griffith-Jones, *Providence, Human and Divine*, p. 245.

The inspiration that makes such suffering possible presupposes the infinite value of every human soul, and the steadfast purpose of God to perfect the life of every one of His children. The most precious of all gifts is offered for the redemption of that which is most precious. The martyrs commit their lives to God as to a faithful Creator. They lay down their lives that they may take them up again in a new and higher fellowship with those for whose blessing they suffer. The consummation of their work is necessarily in the life beyond. And it is only as we believe in the life beyond that we can bear to look upon the problem of suffering as it comes home at last to each individual. With all our acceptance of the beneficent physical and moral uses of suffering in the general progress of the race, we are brought up by special cases in which we cannot help asking, 'Why was this life cut off whose promise was so great, which was so necessary to others ? Why such heaping up of sorrows here, and such immunity there ?' There is *no* answer to such questions unless God has indeed a purpose for each of

His children whose realization only begins in this life. But if this is true, then, though many individual cases baffle us altogether, it is because we only know part of the story, and we may still believe that the last word for each one of us is that *nothing* can separate us from the love of God.

XI

MORAL EVIL

The Problem of Evil

The existence and extent of sin constitutes the greatest practical and theoretical problem of human life. At every stage of development human societies have protected themselves by means of law or of rigidly enforced custom against acts considered dangerous to their well-being. In practice, these safeguards have actually secured the stability and permanence of social order. Man has always been treated by his fellows as responsible to them for a measure of self-restraint. Law and custom, however arbitrary and fantastic they may appear to later generations, have always been based on some rational ground common to the whole society.

The extreme theoretical difficulties involved are seen at once on a broad survey of human thought in this region. In primitive life all aspects of experience are more or less intermingled. Religion, politics, science, morality—these interpenetrate. Clear principles have nowhere emerged, and the natural outcome is polytheism. Here the morality is of a very confused kind. It is very difficult to know what the gods truly will. What pleases one may not please the others. Light comes gradually, religion and morality clarifying one another ; but there is no ultimate rationality or morality in polytheism. It is only in monotheism that morality comes to full authority and power. In ancient thought, alongside all the religions, there emerged the idea of Fate, which was mightier than all men and all gods. This dark shadow is over ancient Greek thought, and over the Muhammadan and Buddhist conceptions of life to-day. It has its counterpart in all modern scientific determinism. Scarcely more hopeful is the ancient dualism, in which an eternal principle of good is balanced against an equally eternal principle of evil. The only system in which there is a place for hope is that of Christian theism, with its belief in one only God, Creator and Father, Himself perfect in righteousness and love, who has given to man reason, conscience, and freedom ; and when through his misuse of these gifts he falls into sin, extends to him His redeeming grace. The correlative of the Christian doctrine of God is the Christian doctrine of man, finite indeed, and yet free, whose sense of moral obligation is no pathetic illusion, but the most fundamental factor of his nature. The denial of freedom is really the denial of personality. Monistic philosophy, in most of its forms, denying the freedom of man, has had to deprive Reality itself of personality. Naturalistic philosophy, acknowledging only empirical facts bound to one another in a closed system, has shut the door on freedom and personality alike. Surely in all this there must be some radical error ; and that error seems to consist in resolute refusal to accept the actual facts of human personality. Human experience is not merely a stream or jumble of events, ‘ a shower of shot.’ It is first of all *my* experience, the experience of an individual ; and it would not be an experience at all but for the synthetic activity of an experiencing subject or self, which is the cause of each item of experience, and also of the unity and continuity of the whole. It is not the whole cause ; because the data of experience are given in the first place from without ; but it is the cause that constitutes those data the experiences of a particular self. Human life is shaped by the response of the self to its environment, which consists of the physical system of the universe, and of other finite selves, and of God, in whom the self and its environment alike have their reality and meaning. As the self uses aright its intellectual powers it gets nearer and nearer to the truth, to the structure of Reality. In relation to other persons, its own intrinsic value makes itself felt. It demands from them consideration and co-operation ; and such demands are absurd unless it is willing to give as much as it demands. Even on the finite level alone, we have thus reached morality. Both truth and morality have an absolute value. What we see to be true we *must* believe, not by any mechanical necessity, but by the free acceptance of reason ; and what is right we *ought* to do, because only so can we realize the highest values of life, both for ourselves and others, and this by the free acceptance of moral responsibility. The problem of what *is* right is dealt with on the same principle. That is right which best befits my status as a person, in fellowship with other persons, and with God. We believe, or most of us do, in a world which is rational from end to end. Scientific procedure is conducted on the conviction that the entire system of nature is ‘ teleological ’ ; though naturalism has arrived at the strange idea of teleological coherence without a true purposive ground. Here theism insists that Mind is the only final cause of anything, and by analogous reasoning is led to believe in a Father of spirits.

The realm of finite, personal, spiritual relations is, to say the least, no less real than that of physical things. The mere possibility of such a realm involves individual moral responsibility, and points to the moral nature of the ultimate Reality. And if God is not only rational, but good, then our ideas of right and wrong are grounded in the absolute goodness which is His character ; and conscience is recognized to be indeed

His voice, speaking to us with the absolute authority, again, not of mechanical coercion, but of holy love. If God be not good, the finite contains higher values than its ground ; and this, surely, is unthinkable.

It is from such a point of view that Christian theism approaches the problem of evil. We are finite persons, with a knowledge of good and evil, with a sense of responsibility, and with a keen sense of remorse on account of ill-doing. That goodness is possible to us we must acknowledge, because it is realized everywhere to some extent, and in some lives gloriously. But we are bewildered and staggered by the widespread prevalence of evil, not only by its active manifestation in so many lives, but by its dire results in the lives of those who do not share the sin. The question is naturally raised, 'Why does not God prevent the evil ? ' What often lies behind the question is a wonder, not why evil is possible at all, but why God does not intervene to restrain it more than He does. It is the excess of evil that baffles the mind, for instance, as seen in the Great War. The argument is put into the form that if God *can* prevent the evil, and does not, He is not good ; and if He cannot, He is really not omnipotent. But it is obvious, and has been pointed out again and again, that if men are not free, they are not really persons ; and if they are free, they can only become good by the use of their freedom in the choice of what is good. And if they can choose good, they can also choose evil : one goes with the other, in the nature of the case. God might have made beings that could neither sin nor suffer ; but they could not then be persons. So the question resolves itself into this, whether a created world where there are no persons is better than one in which all the risks necessary to the nature of finite personality are incurred. It is easy to ask the question, in view of all the mass of evil down all the ages ; but it is really a question for the individual ;

and those who think about it at all, with very few exceptions say it is a good fight, and well worth while. The risks are worth taking ; and if from our limited outlook, why not for God ? The pessimists themselves do not really accept their own interpretation of life, else why rebel at all ? Henley, amidst the bludgeonings of chance, the captain of his soul; Bertrand Russell, defying the Powers there are, on 'the firm foundation of unyielding despair.' Even this defiance of the universe has moral grandeur in it. It really means revolt against any conception that denies goodness to Reality. So Job resolutely maintained his integrity against a God he believed to be unjust. But we think that Socrates in his last hours was nearer the truth when he said, 'Noble is the prize, and great the hope.'

The argument about God's omnipotence is a purely verbal affair, depending upon an arbitrary meaning assigned to the word. Omnipotence, for God, can only mean infinite power as guided by perfect rationality and perfect love. To speak as if an omnipotent God could make a circular square is to ask that He should be able to make something to be at one and the same time both itself and something else quite different ; and this is an absurd and impossible demand. So to ask that God should make men good by an irresistible spiritual constraint is to ask that He should create a being at one and the same time a person and not a person.

Evil and the Natural Order

As to the mystery of creation itself, whether of things or persons, we can never expect to solve that problem. 'Things' can only be rationally understood if they exist for the sake of persons ; and the existence of things and finite persons involves limitation in some sense for God. It is no relief to call them all mere 'appearances'; for you must concede to the appearance a certain degree of reality; and the problem stands as before. All we can demand is that the limitation, whatever it is, should be by the free determination of the Supreme Being. As has been already suggested, it is equally admissible to see an ever-growing enrichment of the divine nature in the creation of beings upon whom God can lavish all the resources of His wisdom and His love.

The perfection of a finite being is only to be achieved through discipline and conflict; and that means the possibility of failure. We are dismayed at the vast extent of that failure in the field of human life; but we cannot affirm that it was inevitable. There may be orders of finite beings who have never fallen; but of that we know nothing. It is generally assumed that the good angels have never sinned; but on what grounds I do not know. It is evidently assumed in the Book of Enoch, which says so much about the punishment of the fallen angels; but the attitude of that book to the subject may be judged from the statement it makes that the fallen angels made to God an earnest appeal for pardon, which He refused.

What we may expect to find in God's government of a world of finite creatures is something of this sort—that He puts them into conditions in which trial is fair, where there is enough light for them to see the way they ought to take, and where all is done that love can do to allure to the way of life, and to dissuade from the paths of evil: and all this we actually do find.

A Christian will see in the realm of physical nature the school in which free finite beings are trained towards moral excellence by One whose love knows all the conditions necessary for such training. So the world is the field in which grace is always operating, and physical law has as its end moral growth. There is *one* God only, in nature and in grace. The severity of nature is a kindly severity, and her final law is the law of love. There is

One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole Creation moves.

So nature must be working for those who love God and one another, and against those who sin, however much the fact may be sometimes disguised. The universe is friendly to the good and hostile to the evil. This is finely brought out in the Book of Wisdom. God 'shall make the whole creation His weapons to repel His enemies . . . the world shall go forth with Him to fight against His insensate foes.'[1] 'Thou sparest all things because they are Thine, O Sovereign Lord, Thou lover of men's souls ; For Thine incorruptible spirit is in all things. Wherefore Thou convictest by little and little them that fall from the right way. And, putting them in remembrance by the very things wherein they sin, Thou dost admonish them. That escaping from their wickedness they may believe on Thee, O Lord.'[2] So says Emerson, 'Speak the truth, and all nature and all spirits help you with unexpected furtherance. Speak the truth and all things alive and brute are vouchers, and the very roots of the grass underground there do seem to stir and move to bear you witness.'[3] May it not be that the puzzling and perverse things in nature constitute an element necessary to moral growth ? 'The question at present is not the kind of world in which perfect goodness can exist, but the kind of world in which goodness can begin to grow and make progress towards perfection. . . . And

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[1] Wisdom of Solomon v. 17, 20.
[2] Op. cit., xi. 26, xii. 1, 2.
[3] Emerson, *Cambridge Address.*

I will hazard the statement that an imperfect world is necessary for the growth and training of moral beings.'[1] 'It is just this unfinished quality in the world, it is just the presence in it of elements not yet fully wrought upon by rational purpose, that gives to life its special quality. It is the incompleteness of the world that makes room for creative effort, for creative loyalty, for creative faith, that makes life, in short, an enterprise rather than an accomplished fact.'[2] Or, as James puts it, 'It *feels* like a real fight—as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to redeem; and first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears.'[3]

So the severity of nature may have a moral meaning and purpose. 'May it not be that Nature is remorseless in order that she may be beneficent—that she stoops to be conquered? May it not be that she pits herself against us as the fencing-master pits himself against his pupil, eager to develop the quick eye, the flexible muscle, the swift brain, the educated skill?'[4]

We are fully justified in saying that the physical order works for the promotion of goodness in human life and for the deterrance of evil. 'The universe is a system of things in which good can be planted, and in which it can bear fruit; it is also a system of things in which there is a ceaseless and unrelenting reaction against evil. This view of nature is vital both to the doctrine of sin and to that of reconciliation.'[5] Cairns, quoting this passage in his *Faith That Rebels*, adds, 'It is vital also to faith in the Divine Providence, and in the power of prayer to influence natural events, as also to the understanding of the " miracles " of the New Testament in particular, and, above all, those of our Lord.' He also says, 'The whole popular theory of the moral neutrality of nature must go by the board, and disappear submerged by the overwhelming advance of knowledge. To say that natural selection, broadly regarded, selects the more highly advanced types of society, and, broadly regarded, destroys the decadent and morally torpid people, to establish this as a general law, in spite of apparent exceptions, is to take a long step towards recognizing not only that " Nature " is anything but " morally neutral," but that the world is under moral government, and that God educates man in truth and goodness, not only through other men, but by the consequences of their own actions, in other words, by the rewards and retaliations of the natural environment.'[1]

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[1] Sorley, *Moral Values*, pp. 343–4. Quoted in Bell, *Sharing in Creation*, p. 203.

[2] Bell, *Sharing in Creation*, p. 210.

[3] James, *Will to Believe*, p. 61.

[4] Bell, *Sharing in Creation*, p. 195.

[5] Denney, *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 202.

Everything that was said in the preceding chapter simply illustrates this truth, and, as Cairns points out, under the discipline of natural law human societies have actually attained to moral strength and stability, however much still remains to be accomplished. Take away the common virtues of the ordinary man, and what would happen? Where selfishness and brute force had everything their own way, human life would become absolutely impossible, and the race would perish. The actual facts of human history show us a progressive moral achievement on the one hand, and a progressive redemptive activity of divine grace on the other.

MORAL PROGRESS

Under providential guidance human society has attained to very high moral ideals and practice, even apart from Christianity. We have but to think of Confucius in the East, and of Socrates and Epictetus in the West, to realize this. We have to keep in mind that civilization and moral progress are not by any means the same thing. We have boundless resources to-day of pleasure, power, and luxury ; but these things are definitely obstacles rather than aids to goodness. Some of the most uncivilized races could teach us many things in the actual practice of goodness. What we are entitled to say is that in some directions there has been real moral progress, in the so-called Christian lands, and that what there has been is due to the activity of Christian men and women who have attempted to infuse Christian principles into modern society.

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[1] Cairns, *The Faith that Rebels*, pp. 129, 147.

We may illustrate by reference to such facts as the disappearance of religious persecution, the humanizing of justice, the abolition of slavery, and the crusade against war. All these movements are against institutions or practices that were taken to be natural and inevitable, and they have all become impossible in proportion to the awakening of the human mind to the higher values and implications of personality which is due to Christian thought as such.

Religious persecution is a strange portent. It is the extreme example of doing evil that good may come. It had its roots in the need of primitive societies to protect their very existence by enforcing the rigid conformity of the individual to the system of the whole. It is utterly at variance with the whole spirit and method of Jesus ; but it got into Christianity as the result of all manner of confused thinking. For the living Way there was substituted a rigid verbal formula, acceptance of which was the sole condition of everlasting life. The words, ‘ compel them to come in,’ taken from our Lord’s parable, were perverted from the urgency of loving appeal to the constraint of physical force. Physical torture in this world was to bring to the soul spiritual blessings in the next. So by this horrible sophistry men were able to indulge themselves in unbridled cruelty towards their fellows, on the pretext that they were doing God service. We hope that all branches of the Christian Church have awakened once and for all from this bad dream. 'In order to read the character of God in the tendency of things, we must undeniably compare their end with their beginning—and the moral sense which, in its dim and dark age, plays the inquisitor, but, emerging into its luminous period, flings its instruments of torture relentlessly away, plainly proclaims the Divine intent to supercede all lower force by the ascendancy of reason, right, and love.'[1]

The institution of slavery was firmly established in human society till quite recent times. It is a basal factor in ancient civilization, and almost inevitably links itself on to war, which also is a product of civilization. Slavery in its ancient forms is at least intelligible; it was better than the indiscriminate slaughter of enemies. The slave, though a chattel, was protected more or less by law. What one can never excuse is slavery under Christian institutions. Paul saw, already, that in Christ there was neither bond nor free, as class distinctions; but all were equal before God. When he wrote of Onesimus that he was 'a brother beloved' he blotted out slavery from the Christian point of view. Strange to say, this was not understood; and we have the disgraceful history of the negro slave-trade as the result. Here cruelty, lust, and greed ran their course under a so-called religious sanction. But, when once the true value of personal life was seen, no man could ever again be treated as a mere chattel; no other relationship of man to man could be tolerated but that of free spirits to free spirits. To quote Martineau again, 'The very fact that society outgrows the institution, and learns to trust all its work to the free springs of character, and is touched with shame that it was ever otherwise, shows what is the idea at the heart of nature—i.e. the aim of the Providence of God. He takes sides against the wrong, and is ever wearing out its power. He has given such advantage to liberty of service as to secure its victory.'[1]

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[1] Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, vol. ii., p. 138.

The campaign of humanity against war has only just begun in earnest. War arises from selfish national ambitions—in former times mainly perhaps from the lust of power of war-captains. Even to-day all the world is groaning under a sort of self-imposed slavery to fear. When Jehovah rebuked the prophet for his ruthless hatred of Nineveh, He asked him why He should destroy six score thousand little children. An American writer tells of an incident which showed him the inner nature of the problem. During the war, he was sitting in a station in Berlin, when a tiny German child came up to him and put her hands on his knees and smiled up into his face. It came home to him that he could not hate a German baby. War is just as irrational as that. It hardly needs to be said that war is utterly opposed to the whole spirit and aim and method of the Prince of Peace. Yet it has been, and still is, regarded as natural to man, and for ever bound up with the well-being of human society. As we have already noted, that view is based on the biological fallacy that internecine struggle is the only way of national life and progress. Once this obsession can be removed from the minds of men, war will become as impossible as slavery.

The progress that has been made already in moral life gives us a good ground for believing in the effective guidance of God in His Providence, and affords hope of yet greater things in the future. Evil has within it the germs of its own destruction ; good, on the other hand, is creative. Goodness is a unity ; evil is manifold and distracted, as Paul hints, when he contrasts the ‘fruit’ of the Spirit with the ‘works’ of the flesh. Goodness accumulates power; evil dissipates it. ‘Power is thus being always lost in those in whom conscience sleeps, and always gained by those who form themselves by the higher law; so that the tendency is for the human causality to go entirely over to the faithful and heroic among men, the rest falling away to the borders of the animal types, that sooner or later are sure to find their subordinate place.’[1] Goodness is ever building up a fellowship in society by which it can continually grow to greater things: evil is selfishness, the assertion of the single life against all others. The casual associations due to self-interest have no permanence; there is no ultimate honour among thieves.

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[1] Op. cit., vol. ii., p. 137.

Religion and Morality

The last question is, whether the resources available for humanity are adequate to the complete and final conquest of evil. Here the moral problem is inseparable from religion. Morality is not the same as religion, though both deal with life as a whole. Morality, rightly understood, brings us to the transcendent activity of a personal God; but this is not explicit in the moral life, which is concerned with my station and its duties, here and now. The pressure of conscience is felt in all human life, whatever the stage of religious knowledge may be, or even if there is no religious life at all. Nevertheless, religion and morality are very closely allied, and have always acted and reacted one upon the other, to their mutual advantage. Each is necessary to the other; but religion is the greater, and without it morality has no eternal ground and no final victory. It is only as God is known and loved that conscience can be perfectly obeyed. It is only by redeeming grace that her wounds can be healed. The enormous advance in moral possibilities that Christianity has brought about is well stated by Bowne: ‘ Christianity itself wrought its great moral revolution, not by introducing new moral principles, but by revealing new conceptions of God and man and their mutual relations. By making all men the children of a common Father, it did away with the earlier ethnic conceptions and the barbarous morality based upon them. By making every man the heir of eternal life, it gave to him a sacredness which he could never lose and which might never be ignored. By making the moral law the expression of a Holy Will, it brought that law out of its impersonal abstraction and assured its ultimate triumph. Moral principles may be what they were before, but moral practice is for ever different. Even the earth itself has another look when it has a heaven above it.’[1]

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[1] Op. cit., vol. ii., p. 114.

Christianity has brought into human life, not only new and creative ideas, but new and creative powers, which are equal to man’s deepest moral needs. We have to do with a God who is Holy Love, whose activity in human life is necessarily redemptive, who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He has said, ‘ All souls are mine.’ The Good Shepherd goes out into the desert to seek the one lost sheep, until He finds it, and brings it home rejoicing. His gift is not a bare salvation, but the fullness of life. That life is *in* His Son, who is every man’s ideal and fulfilment, who has for each one unique gifts and a unique work, and for whom He has prepared a place in the Father’s House above.

The nature, teaching, and work of Christ all give grounds for hope. He taught the supreme value of every single soul. He proclaimed the forgiveness of sins, and the gracious will of the Father to save the most abandoned. He lived on earth a perfect human life. In His death on the cross He offered Himself as the reconciler of God and sinful men, as God and man bowing under the weight of all human sin, and revealing a love that is infinitely greater than the power of sin. In His risen glory He is leading men who are crucified with Him into the life that is life indeed. In living fellowship with Him His brethren live in a higher world. Sin has no more dominion over them. Old things have passed away ; all things have become new.

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[1] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 300.

We are often told that Christianity is a failure, and are reminded of all the vice and irreligion prevalent in so-called Christian lands. But, in the last resort, so far as Christianity is a failure, it is because individual men and women will not accept and use the grace of God. The fact is, the Christian ethic is too exacting, and it is either refused or shirked. The ultimate problem is a private and personal one. The one last question is, ' Can I be set free from sin ? ' To this the reply must be, that all the needs of the situation have been fully and finally met in Christ. In Christ, divine love has said the last word ; and what more is possible ? We go back to the point from which we started—that God Himself cannot *compel* any man to be saved. ' I stand at the door and knock.' If any one wills to open the door, the Lord of all good life comes in ; and not otherwise. Too often it has to be said, ' I stretched out My hands all the day long, in vain appeal, to a disobedient and gainsaying people.'

The failure of Christianity is at least only partial. It would be a strange blindness to deny its marvellous success in every individual case where it has been honestly tried. Time would fail to tell of the triumphs of faith—great sinners turned into great saints, despair turned into hope, the power of evil actually overcome in countless lives : with so great a cloud of witnesses are we compassed about. No doubt the Christian Church is a very imperfect institution. In all sorts of ways it has very inadequately represented the spirit and teaching and method of its Lord. Individual Christians have often been very poor witnesses to the power and love that saves them ; but for all men everywhere God has done, and still is doing, all that grace can do.

The problem of evil is not only individual, but social as well. Religion at first was, like morality, bound up with tribal customs and interests ; the individual counted for almost nothing. At this stage both religion and morality were largely matters of external tradition and convention. Slowly the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme, and religion was taken to be a purely private affair between the soul and God. The result of this was, in our country at any rate, a strange indifference to the great social evils that grew rapidly with the advance of modern industrialism. But religion in its full development takes account both of the individual and of society. Christian believers ‘ abide in Christ ’ as the centre of their new life ; but they are therefore in a new sense ‘ members one of another,’ and have a new and special responsibility for those who, though not believers, are equally the objects of the divine grace and love. The salvation they have personally received is a gift held in trust for the help of all men. The Christian Church is not ‘ a little garden walled around,’ but a fighting army against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. The gratitude of the individual soul for the goodness of God has its supreme practical expression in the effort to save all who are under the power of evil, whatever form it may take, in the moral, industrial, or political conditions of society. The religious duty of the saved man to his Saviour is not merely private, in pure living and the diligent use of the ‘ means of grace,’ but also public, in the succouring of his neighbour. We believe that as God's people more resolutely co-operate with Him, in public service, as well as in private devotion, the kingdoms of the world *will* become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ.

XII

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

THE question of man's immortality is not merely relevant to the study of Providence, it is the necessary complement and completion of it. Our conception of God as personal will be greatly marred, if, after having created finite persons, He has to let them lapse into nothingness. Our conception of man's personality is equally diminished, if that wonderful gift is merely temporary ; and man himself at the last has only the same destiny as all material ' things.' Our conception of the universe as embodying purpose is frustrated, if, after the vast aeons of progress towards a great spiritual goal, man himself should share the fate of the lower realms of nature, and his life dissolve, and, ' like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wrack behind.' This would be to insert irretrievable failure into the very heart of Reality.

We believe that, adequately to understand Providence, we must explore the meaning of immortality ; and whatever light comes to us on this subject is also light on Providence.

INTIMATIONS FROM BIOLOGY

To start on the level, as far as may be, of objective facts, we may continue the argument of a preceding chapter, by noticing some of the suggestions and intimations of immortality which directly arise out of biological facts and evolutionary theory.

We may first note the meaning of the progress which we see in the whole order of animate nature which culminates in man. Fiske, in his work on *The Destiny of Man*, speaks of the whole order as having a ‘ dramatic tendency,’ culminating in man with his spiritual endowments, and so is led to accept the belief in immortality as ‘ a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God’s work ’ (p. 116).

We observe that mind, which seems at first to be largely at the service of physical needs, acquires an increasing independence, and at last, in man, has attained to transcendence of the physical, in the development of faculties, artistic, mathematical, and so forth, which have no mere survival value, and cannot be due to natural selection. These have culminated in moral and religious activities which, in their very nature, point to a realm higher than the physical, to which it is subordinated. Human life ‘ is still inwoven with the meshes of fine molecular changes ; but it is a life which has escaped from bondage to a purely physical service.’[1] The conclusion is that ‘ the tendency of nature towards perfection is an upreaching towards an order, and range, and freedom of life, which shall not merely have sacrificial value for the sake of something beyond it, but also an eternal survival-value because it is fitted to live for the glory of God in the highest for ever.’[2]

Life on its main lines is an ascent. There is nothing more impressive in Bergson’s works than his picture of life, at first entrammelled in matter, but never subdued by it, winning its widening way through one obstacle after another, not *losing* impetus as it branches out into new forms, but ever attaining fuller mastery, until in a higher freedom it triumphs over it altogether, and may at last overcome death itself. Bergson’s *élan vital* is blind, as all mere force must be blind ; but what Bergson himself seems to be blind to, is the fact that such force can only be the activity of a Will, moving towards a goal ; and the goal clearly indicated is that in the end mortality shall be ' swallowed up ' of life eternal.

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[1] Smyth, *The Place of Death in Evolution*, p. 114. [2] Op. cit., p. 103.

Nothing is more remarkable in the animate world than the relation of adaptation to environment. Variations, ' given ' in the organism, find their response in the environment. The incipient lung, first enabling a brief excursion into the upper air, at last, by 'given' increments, makes possible a full life in a higher region. The effort to fly was justified in the creation of the orders of birds and insects. The rudimentary endowment is the anticipation of ever fuller response. This is so generally true that from the marks of special adaptation in the organism one can at once argue to the fitting environment, and conversely. Darwin, finding an orchis with a spur of the astonishing length of eleven and a half inches, was ridiculed when he said that a moth would be found with an equally long proboscis ; but such moths have eventually been found. Now it would be extraordinarily strange and contradictory if this principle in lower nature, of reaching out to worlds unrealized, and never in vain, were suddenly to fail when we come to those very faculties which appear in principle to have an unlimited promise. If the lower creatures are not merely saved, but glorified by hope, why not man ? ' The existence of spiritual power within us is likewise presumption that some fitting environment waits for the spirit when it shall be perfected and set free. Or, as a prophet of old put it : God " worketh for him that waiteth for Him." '[1] In his great Resurrection argument, Paul says of the different kinds of living creatures, ' God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own,' and, ' There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial.' His ideas seem to agree very well with the modern evolutionary scheme. In organic development we have to distinguish three factors. There is first the primitive organism, with a certain autonomy, a power of choice, either to push onward, or merely to maintain its ground, or to sink back. We have ' given ' variations and an environment in which they may find a home. What evolution teaches is that all the ' bodies ' of the various creatures on the line of upward progress have been *won* by effort and a sort of unconscious faith. The possibility of rising was given, the welcoming environment was given ; but, had the creature itself not used the gift, nothing would have come of it. The highest creatures are those which reap the harvest of innumerable efforts in the past, and faithfulness to the gifts bestowed. Now, if evolutionary theory is not astray, man's body is the perfected result of this process. In him, and especially in his brain, physical possibilities seem to be pretty well exhausted. All, or nearly all, has been done that can be done in this direction. Under guidance, man has won a body capable of being, up to a point, the organ of a fully conscious personal life. When physical death intervenes, is there anything unlikely in the expectation that the spirit may continue the progress so recently attained, under other conditions, and in what Paul calls a celestial, or ' spiritual,' body ? God's method in the past, and the very nature of the spiritual life, both suggest that this is what will happen.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 106.

The Function of Physical Death

Immortality may be spoken of as the defeat of physical death—' O death, where is thy victory ? '—yet this may not express the deepest truth of the matter. Death may be the servant of life ; so that it is truly the gate into the life that is life indeed. If it can be shown to be an essential condition of progress in the animate world, we bring it into the providential order as a blessing rather than a menace and a curse, and may believe that it plays a beneficent part in human life also. We should then speak of life as making use of death, on the way to a goal that lies beyond it. Death is not so much conquered as superseded. The biological function of death has been elucidated in the most convincing way by Newman Smyth in his work, *The Place of Death in Evolution*, the main points of which are here reproduced. Mortality is not an inherent property of living entities, it is an adaptation, and as such has a well-defined purpose. The primitive unicellular organisms do not die, they divide, and go on living as separate individuals. Wilson says, ' It is not known whether or not the *amoeba* ever dies of old age.' Weismann strongly insisted on this point, as also on the ' immortality ' of the germ-plasm, from which the succession of generations of higher creatures originates. Of course, we know that all physical life on this earth must end some day, by the failure of the sun's power ; but that has nothing to do with the normal death of organisms. Weismann speaks of ' the power of living on indefinitely when the vital processes have once begun, as the fundamental peculiarity of living matter.'[1]

Death appears with the evolution of complex, many-celled organisms, and in close connexion with the sexual method of reproduction. It would seem that the specialization of the cells had something to do with their mortality, or at least that death is the price paid by the organism for its greater elaboration of living processes. Certainly we see that *without* death organic progress would have been utterly impossible ; and, if so, it takes its place as a positive teleological factor in the whole scheme. It is ' a device for turning out improved manufactures ' in nature's workshop. ' One parent passes away in order that others may catch up the motion of life, and in turn transmit to others life's rhythm and joy. Thus death comes in to help, not merely to hurt ; to help life farther on and higher up, not to put a stop to life.'[1] We may thus see in the vast panorama of organic species, succeeding one another down the ages, a providential provision for the utmost possible variety and richness of life, on the comparatively limited field of the earth's surface.

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[1] Weismann, *Essays in Heredity*, vol. ii., p. 209.

Similar considerations apply to human life, especially if we regard it as in its first stages, and this earth as the preparatory school of all souls. For 'if no succession of generations could be secured by death ; if all who are born here were to live and linger on until the last day ; this narrow, earthly field of immortal life would soon become choked, exhausted, incapable of sustaining further multiplication of the human race.'[2] The result would be fewer scholars in life's school, and for human society a much retarded progress. For under such conditions, tradition—which, as things are, secures steadiness and continuity of progress—would stereotype all life, and produce universal stagnation. This would be an almost intolerable system, both for old and young alike. But through the ordinance of death, the young have full scope for their growing powers, and the old, whose progress is in so many ways blocked by physical infirmity, enter a new sphere in which to apply to new tasks all the powers they have won through faithfulness here. 'Death may be but the provision for taking us abroad, ere we have stopped too long at home, and unsealing the closed inlets of wisdom, affection, and reverence by the surprise of new light. In this aspect death, instead of frustrating the ends of life, becomes the great arrester of ills—the liberator of souls, for both the visible and invisible worlds.'[3] We may well believe that the quick succession of lives on the field of earth has not only the result of securing the fullest possible progress in our mortal life, but of creating a host of complementary activities in the life beyond, as those who leave this sphere in many degrees of immaturity may be enlightened and led by the higher spirits yonder whose greatest joy would be in such a ministry.

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[1] Smyth, *The Place of Death in Evolution*, p. 29.

[2] Op. cit., p. 168.

[3] Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, vol. i., p. 398.

For the lower creation, death appears as wholly beneficent ; but for human life only conditionally so. *If* he is immortal, and only so, can man garner its full harvest. But we have already seen that the whole trend of the natural order is towards the dominance of spirit. The body is for the spirit, and not the spirit for the body. The future of the individual self is to be judged, not from the nature of protoplasm, but from the nature of the soul. It may well be that when death has served its turn and achieved its purpose, it will no longer be needed anywhere in God's universe.

All this argument appears at the first sight to be at variance with the biblical conception of death as the penalty to man's sin. Evidently the coming of sin introduced a new function of death. Every law of life may work in two ways : if obeyed it is a blessing ; if disobeyed, it may become a curse. In the lower world, there could be no sin, and death fulfilled its first intention, of ministering to life. When sin came in, death acquired a retributive character which was not at first natural to it. ' Death is a curse of no animal, except man.' ' Sin may render death naturally more evil, its reaction may tend to make it an actual curse.' ' Already existing as an adaptation for a natural use, it may be seized upon by the higher law of spiritual selection, and fitted to a moral use, and also, when used in connexion with moral powers, it may receive an increased retro-active energy as a natural force.'[1] Death, coming untimely upon so many, as the direct or indirect result of sin, becomes a curse for that very reason, and is naturally regarded as the King of Terrors. It is perfectly in accord with this that Christian faith restores man's right relation to physical death. To a believing man, death is no longer a curse at all, it is his discharge from his present task, and his admission into a fuller life. Here and now, he has eternal life. Like Paul, he may be in a strait betwixt two, not knowing whether he would like to stay or go. Death thus resumes its beneficent purpose in the providential order.

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[1] Smyth, *The Place of Death in Evolution*, pp. 146, 155, 157.

Implications of Man's Life as Moral

We are justified, in view of the considerations urged above, in saying that human life, regarded biologically, bears the aspect of a guided process, tending towards immortality. When, further, we pass on to study the implications of man's life as moral, immortality in some form is necessarily implied. Man, as moral, is a person, free and responsible. He is an individual with a unique status, an 'end for himself'; and if Reality has unalterable claims upon him, he has equally claims upon Reality. When we give man, as a moral person, his right position in relation to God, immortality comes in as the inevitable sequel. This argument, from Kant onwards, has many times been admirably set out. The moral life is, in principle, eternal, and its realization *is* eternal life. 'In every moral act man transcends the limits of the present life, and becomes already a citizen of the eternal world. He has not to wait for his immortality; it broods over him even in the present, it is the very atmosphere of his life as a moral being.'[1]

Our moral tasks are never half done in this life. It is not merely that many lives are here moral failures, but that in the best lives all present achievement opens up endless vistas of possibilities which can never be made actual on earth. Theodore Parker, when dying, said, ‘ I have only half used my powers.’ Victor Hugo said, ‘ I feel I have not said a thousandth part of what is in me.’ In this life we are all at school ; and just when we are getting to master the high art of living we are deprived of the means of exercising it. Surely not ! This would mean a radical defect at the very heart of things. Surely that trust in the faithfulness of God which has produced so much nobility in human lives is at the same time the highest reason.

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[1] Seth, *Ethical Principles*, p. 45.

There is a way of thought that accepts the idea of immortality, but not as necessarily the destiny of particular persons. There is the absolute idealism which regards personality as mere appearance, to be at last ‘ transmuted ’ in the Absolute, which Itself is not personal. The objections to this have already been touched upon. Nothing is more real, here and now, than finite human persons. *Here* they are sustained and blessed ; and, if now, why not always ? At any rate, in the Christian view, my love for God is a response to His love for me ; and the divine love could never let go its objects, and doom them to annihilation. There is also the idea of Naturalism that the only immortality worth speaking about is the influence which we transmit to those who follow us. But if this is the whole result of *our* moral effort, what about those who follow us ? At some period, the whole race is destined to perish from the earth, and then, from this point of view, all the gains of all the ages will be wiped out ; nothing of them will be left anywhere, and no one will have ultimately profited at all. The real problem is that of the individual, not of his influence upon others. Schiller says, ‘ The character itself is an indefeasible and inalienable possession of the owner, and by no flight of the imagination can it be transferred to others. Whatever worth, therefore, we assign to character, that worth is lost to the world if immortality be denied.'[1] Of course, it is the immortality of the individual that is referred to.

The very nature of personality implies that God must be utterly faithful to every single individual ; and without personal immortality this is plainly impossible. All the difficulties connected with the providential order culminate here. If the earthly life of each person is to be completed yonder, then we have a means of bearing with all those anomalies and inequalities of the earthly life which would otherwise drive us to despair. For in all previous discussions of such matters as pain and evil and the many disasters to which this earth-life is subject, though we could find broad principles of beneficent guidance everywhere, yet there was always in the background a feeling that somehow a great many individuals failed to get their due. We know the feeling is wrong ; because God must love all His children equally, and is able to do all for them. At any rate, the case of the many who suffer in great disasters of all kinds is difficult ; and there is the problem of the long ages of the education of our race, and of the backward and degenerate races to-day. It is not allowable to suggest that many of these lower races are hardly to be counted as having any personality at all. They all have the capacity for full moral life, given the right opportunity and education. If in such cases personal immortality is a fact, we can bring them all into a beneficent providential scheme ; otherwise it seems hardly possible. If God has eternity to work in, He can perfect His work, even for those who have had the fewest opportunities here, or were cut off almost before their education had begun.

Moreover, the *hope* of immortality is itself an element in God's guidance of our earthly lives. There are those who say that we need no such help. There are men who believe neither in God nor in immortality, but hold fast to morality. They will say, ‘ If there is no hereafter, it none the less remains, that love is better than hate, and unselfishness than selfishness. We need no other help than our own conscience.’ Such words testify to the deeply ingrained morality of human nature, and the potent influence of theistic faith. Men who speak thus do not realize the strength of the foundations on which society is built, nor the nature of the safeguards to which they owe their security. If, on any large scale, belief in God and immortality were to die out of our common life, there would be a very different story to tell.

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[1] Schiller, *Humanism*, p. 253.

It is even said that conduct based on fear of punishment or hope of reward is actually immoral. Such conduct may not be of the highest type of morality, but it is far from being immoral. A man may avoid certain sins because they will injure his health, and mainly for that reason ; but, even so, he is honouring physical law. A régime of rewards and punishments is the primary school of morality. It steadies conduct in its first stages, until conscience can move more freely in the light of reason and faith. It is said that nature knows no penalties, only results ; but in the moral world results become penalties. The fruit of righteousness is life, and the fruit of sin is death, both physically and morally ; but these issues are often disguised in the present ; and the very opposite seems to be the fact. We need the complete unveiling which will come in the life beyond to make these principles perfectly clear and self-evident. Then the apparent anomalies of the providential order will be explained.

Another mode of argument is this, that concern for the life beyond results in a sort of ‘ other-worldliness ’ most detrimental to right conduct here. Live to-day at your best, and let the life hereafter take care of itself. Now, we know that there is a kind of sentimental other-worldliness which does lead people to shirk their earthly tasks ; but a just view of eternal life gives to these tasks an immeasurably greater significance. If the moral life is *essentially* eternal, we can neglect nothing that belongs to our duty here. This is not only important for the present, but for the future also, for it will determine the future. The great cause of moral inertia here is that men will not think of the future fruition of their acts and lives. The urgency of conscience and the sting of remorse are part of the providential guidance which will not let us be easy here. Socrates, in his defence before his judges, said that if they condemned him they would be removing from their society a gadfly which stung them to moral activity ; and, though they would be more comfortable then, it would be a very bad thing for them.

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

For religion, the hope of immortality is a matter of supreme importance. In the New Testament, and in the life and teaching of Jesus, the future life is a central theme and interest. This we need to insist upon, since, to quote G. A. Smith, 'in the thinking of civilized men there has been for years a steady drift from the shores of another life.'[1] Young people especially will say that they are not worrying about their own souls or their future, but about the present needs of their less fortunate neighbours. Men are absorbed in the newly discovered marvels of the physical universe, and the great problems of social reconstruction, of world-peace, and of missionary enterprise. All this is admirable and urgently necessary ; but it can lead to nothing of ultimate value except in the light of the world to come. Life eternal is the background of all the teaching of Jesus ; and, of course, it is bound up with His conception of the Fatherhood of God and the infinite value of the human soul. 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' 'Fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.' For Jesus, immortality is bound up with the intrinsic relations of God and man : 'He is not a God of the dead, but of the living.' Our Lord's reply to the Sadducees expresses in final form that old thought of the psalmists, that God can never let go one who loves Him, and whom He loves. Mackintosh says, 'If we were not so familiar with our Lord's words, I think they would astonish us. They reveal such a thought of God and of man, and of the relation of one to the other, as includes immortality as a simple part of itself.'[1] 'It seems, then, that as soon as we are brave enough, not only to believe in the existence of God, but to accept the revelation of God as the God of love, the belief in personal immortality is secure.'[2]

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[1] Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 209.

For Jesus, the life beyond was in vital unity with the life of service to which He was called on earth. His mission was to lay down His life for the blessing and salvation of men : 'I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me.' He was to accept in complete meekness the misunderstanding and hatred of His own nation, and to experience the terrors of Gethsemane and Calvary, as a means to the accomplishment of the redeeming work He was to do beyond the grave. On the one side we have the tremendous faith which accepted the Cross, though it might seem to declare the very impotence of God, and on the other we have the victory of countless men and women who have been uplifted from their sins and their fears by faith in the Crucified.

The link that connects them is the Resurrection. This was, for the first disciples, not a matter of faith

[1] Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, p. 176.

[2] Braham, *Ourselves and Reality*, p. 348.

at all, but of direct experience. It transformed their faith in Jesus as Messiah, which had been extinguished by His death, into faith in a divine Redeemer, now exalted at the right hand of God. To them the words of Jesus, ' If I go away I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am there ye may be also,' were not so much a ground of hope as a ground of certainty. They *knew* that death would usher them into their Master's presence in Paradise. Whatever view we take of the appearances of the risen Lord, if we accept the witness of the apostles, we *know* that they knew, that they had living contact with Him, here on earth, after His death. We have as much right to the inspiration of the fact as they had. We *know* what God did for Jesus ; and it is our assurance of what He will one day do for us. ' We know,' Paul says, ' that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also with Jesus.'

This assurance rests upon a definite promise of Jesus to His disciples individually : ' I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me.' ' I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.' ' I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine.' Here we have personal guidance, the Providence of the Great Shepherd, sufficient for all things, here and hereafter. Whatever be the darkness around us, the mysteries of life, its afflictions and disappointments, we are saved by this hope. *I* am safe—who shall separate *me* from His love, the love of God in Christ ? And if I am safe, I know also that the same love, the same hope, are given to those others, about whom I may be often troubled more than about myself. Here is one answer to those who tell us we ought not to be so concerned about what is to happen to our insignificant self. We never are thinking about ourselves alone. We are jealous of God's love for those who are dearer to us than life.

' In Jesu's keeping *they* are safe, and we '—to transpose a familiar line.

In the Christ, the Incarnate Son, we see humanity brought to its full perfection. He is the perfect Man, sinless and immortal ; and our final destiny is revealed in what He is. He is our Head, and His work is to perfect our lives as we grow up into Him in all things. That work is only begun in this life. ' Already are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is.' This is our great incentive to moral effort and spiritual service here, than which there could be none higher ; for ' every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.'

Philosophical Criticism

Immortality is one of the ultimate metaphysical questions. For Plato, philosophy is meditation upon death. After attempting to outline the reasons for our belief in immortality that are given in our experience as biological, ethical, and religious, it remains to ask whether they can be discredited by general philosophical criticism. I think that philosophical criticism could only annul the hope of immortality if it could prove that mind is indissolubly bound to matter. In such discussions the term ' mind ' is used, generally to the exclusion of all others. This gives to ordinary people the impression that the whole argument is too abstract and unreal. We must note that when the term ' mind ' is used in this connexion it carries with it an inclusive reference to all our higher faculties, all our aesthetic and moral and religious qualities and ideals and aspirations, which share the fate of mind, just so far as mind is belittled. There are vital issues in question.

One theory is that mind is an ' epi-phenomenon,' a mere will-o'-the-wisp, playing over the surface of matter. This theory is probably dead. It really shirks the question ; but with the damaging suggestion that mind is a sort of attenuated matter. On another view, mind is the product of matter, which is the primary reality. This theory ought to be dead ; but, strange to say, it was affirmed by Sir Arthur Keith not long ago, in his address to the British Association. The only respectable theory of this kind at present current is that of complete psycho-physical parallelism, by which mind is carried down to the least particle of matter, existing in a rudimentary form even in an electron. There is never any interaction, only concomitance. This, as McDougall puts it, is to pool all the mysteries of the relation of mind and body in one absolute mystery—namely, how to explain the parallelism. This is not attempted at all ; the explanation is merely shelved ; and the apparent interaction, which is a most obvious fact of our hourly experience, must be supposed an illusion. Certainly, we must say, this attributing to inorganic matter of mind which has none of the specific characters of mind is pure mythology.

James pointed out that there were at least three alternative theories which would allow of a causal relation between mind and matter : namely, a theory of production, or of release—as when a switch turns on an electric current—or of transmission. This last is well suggested in the following illustration. 'The whole question of the possibility of the continuance of conscious life after the destruction of the body is simply this : Is the relation of matter to spirit that of a cause as an engine is to steam, or that of a medium as a prism's is to light ? '[1]

Upon the whole, the value of philosophical study is rather in the direction of clearing away inadequate views of Reality than of taking us very far in a positive direction. Our faith is that Reality itself will justify all our highest hopes ; and, on the whole, philosophy does confirm this faith as eminently reasonable. No philosopher has discussed the problem of immortality more fully and earnestly than Plato. He reasons in its favour along several lines, as, for instance, in the *Phaedo*, which purports to be the conversation between Socrates and his friends, just before the executioner brought the fatal hemlock. Most of Plato's formal arguments look strange to us ; but we can see that behind the arguments there is the conception of the soul as individual, and in its very nature eternal. James has told us that it is very important to distinguish the philosopher's *vision* from his technique. The technique is often cumbersome, and even repellant. Now, Plato's vision comes extraordinarily near to the Christian vision—a God whose goodness is the motive of Creation, who has made man immortal, and beyond the grave will judge him according to righteousness. Plato knows, better than most philosophers, that arguments can only go so far, and in his myths he tries, as a great artist, to give us what he sees, but cannot prove. In the *Phaedo*, we have to consider, not merely the arguments, but the man who puts them forth. It is Socrates who is arguing, the man whose whole life was service of his fellows in the cause of truth, a philosopher whose school was the market-place rather than the academy, who in the end went serenely to his death, when he might easily have avoided it, in the confidence that all would be well. When Crito asked, ' How shall we bury you ? ' Socrates replied, smiling, ' As you please ; only you must catch me first.'

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[1] Simpson, *The Facts of Life*, p. 203. Quoted by Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, p. 170.

For those who, here and now, live in happy fellowship with God, any power of death to end that fellowship is unthinkable. Providence, which guides in life, will not fail at death. In the valley of the shadow, they will fear no evil. They already possess eternal life. ‘ He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.’ Our citizenship is in heaven, and our names are inscribed there.

THE LIFE BEYOND

Naturally imagination fails us when we try to depict the details of the life beyond ; and it must be so. This is no reason at all for refusing to believe in that life. Heaven has often been spoken of as just a state of eternal rest, or of eternal ecstasy, or of nothing but endless singing of hymns and playing on harps ; but it is not difficult to imagine something very much worthier than that. ‘ His servants shall serve Him,’ with powers released for ever new activities. In the present life we have intimations that guide our thoughts here. On earth we have the work of a divine Artist—the majesty of sea and forest and mountain in all their diverse forms, and the exquisite beauty of the flowers and living creatures. This beauty is *perfect.* Heaven itself will give us nothing more lovely than many of the sights of earth. And if this world is so fair, will the next disappoint us ? Perhaps there the scientist will be able, not only to continue his exploration of the wonders of the creative work, but to take some part in advancing it still further. We have enough of the rich blessings of social life here to imagine what it will be like when sin has passed out of it altogether. And there may be opportunities of redemptive employment in helping those who in this sphere had very slender spiritual opportunities.

One thing we may be sure of, that all that personality means will be preserved and enhanced. Fellowship with God will be unhindered. We shall see the Lord, face to face. He has taken with Him into glory that humanity which He assumed here on earth. *He* is there, and He awaits His friends. And the assurance that we shall see Him is also the assurance that we shall be re-united in fellowship with our own earthly friends. The best that is in us we have received, by God's grace, from them, and have shared with them. Only we are sadly conscious how much we have failed them by the dullness of our insight into their highest and truest nature, have failed to give them our best, and to accept from them their best. Yonder the veil will be taken away ; and we shall be able to perfect that life of fellowship which is so imperfect here. This mutual love is God's greatest gift here ; and it would not be like Him if it were not to come to its full fruition yonder in His presence.

One further word is this : If indeed the hope of immortality is becoming to any large extent a matter of indifference to Christian people, it is a very unfortunate fact. If it is not, it *ought* to be central in Christian faith. How can God effectively guide people who will not look in the right direction ? The Christian will never conquer the world unless he realizes that he is not *of* the world, that his true life is hid with Christ in God. We are given earthly good to put it to heavenly uses. If we yield our heart to the things of the present, we lose all sense of eternal values. ' The world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'

XIII

PROVIDENCE IN THE BIBLE

The belief of Christian people in the scope and method of the Providential Order is naturally determined by the material so richly provided in the Bible. Everywhere throughout the book, God is presented as personally active both in nature and human life. It is the same God who created all things who also calls and guides His people. Everywhere God's providential activity meets the prayer and faith of men. God always has a well-defined purpose, which is at last fully revealed in the gift of His Son, through whom life and immortality are brought to light.

All the way through this essay, one question in mind has been, Can we still believe in the God of Providence, as He is presented to us in the Bible ? We hope that belief is fully justified. In the sketch that follows, completed by the notes on 'Judgement' and 'The Ministry of Angels' in the Appendix, the lines of exposition follow in the main those already laid down in the book.

Divine Guidance in the Old Testament

Only a very incomplete outline can be given ; for to do justice to the subject almost a complete commentary on the Bible would be required. For the purposes of such an outline it is hardly necessary to allow for differences of date, or of composite authorship. These may account for conflicting views, even within the Bible ; but it is the ideas themselves we have to deal with, whatever their date or authorship. In the Old Testament the being of God is accepted as a primary reality : it is not proved or discovered ; for God is always first in the field, and reveals Himself by His acts. First and last, He is a person, with ethical qualities. He bears a personal name—Jehovah. It may be that Israel began with a very imperfect knowledge of His character, but that knowledge, being from the first on right lines, naturally expanded into full ethical monotheism. The history of Israel is a history of God's providential grace. At the first He called Abraham, and in the history of Abraham we have a kind of epitome of the ways of Providence and the response of faith : the two always go together. Faith conditions the work of Providence ; unbelief frustrates it. In Hebrews we have the significance of Abraham's career drawn out. He had faith to obey God's call, and ' he went out, not knowing whither he went.' He had faith to wait God's time, ' sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange country,' and he had faith to surrender Isaac, because he trusted his great Friend to the uttermost, ' accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead.' So he opened the way of faith for all the ages, and made it possible for God's gracious purpose to be set free for the blessing of mankind.

Later on came the call of Israel. God brought them out of the house of bondage. He ' led them through the depths as a horse in the wilderness, that they stumbled not.' He led them forty years in the wilderness, chastening them ' as a man chasteneth his son.' He made a covenant with them, and henceforth all His dealings with them are on the basis of the covenant. The covenant itself is founded on grace. The Law is God's gift to Israel, and is intended as a means to their moral education. At the end of the forty years, God brought them into the Land of Promise, and subdued the nations before them. In times of peril He raised up saviours for them. He gave them kings. Here the call of David has special significance: ‘I took thee from following the sheep that thou shouldst be prince over My people, over Israel.’ To David is given the promise of an abiding kingdom and unchanging kindness. We know what a chequered and troubled history Israel had; it is all set out in the Bible as a moral process. Unbelief was continually frustrating God’s purposes, but they were never wholly defeated. Always there was a godly remnant that responded. Even the disasters of the Exile and the destruction of Jerusalem did not destroy the hope of Israel; they only lifted it to a higher level, and gave it a world-wide significance. Then, ‘when the fullness of the time was come,’ God sent forth His Son, through whom all the promises made to Abraham and to David were spiritually fulfilled beyond all the measure of their highest hopes.

The God who was thus active in the history of Israel may have been understood at first as one amongst many, but He was always a true and living God. Popular thought may have demanded of Him that He should succour His people whatever their character might be; but the great prophets had a very different conception of Him. God’s call of Israel was not to special indulgence, but to special responsibility. ‘You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.’ God’s call is not exclusively to Israel. He who brought Israel out of Egypt also brought the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir. His calling of Israel was for the sake of other nations, to be the light of the nations. One day God will be able to say, ‘Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance.’ In the book of Jonah we see that God’s purposes of grace extend to the cruellest nation of the ancient world.

Here we see God as the one and only God, having in His hands the entire course of human history, and designing to bless all nations at last along with His people. This God is righteous and merciful, He is good to all. His supreme requirements are moral. ‘ What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ’

God is spoken of in a very human way. He makes bare His arm, His eyes are in every place, His hand is not shortened that it cannot save. He repents, is grieved, is angry, is jealous, He confirms His word by an oath. The rabbis toned all this down as much as they could, with the result that they only reached a kind of deism. Early Hebrew modes of expression are highly pictorial ; but this does not mean that the writers thought of God as a ‘ magnified non-natural man ’ : this is precisely what they did not think. They *did* think of Him as always effectively near and operative, and as acting morally. The Shechinah was manifested in the Temple, and yet they knew that ‘ the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee ; how much less this house which I have builded.’ The fact is, we may rarify our language about God to such an extent that He is left without any character at all.

God’s Providence not only watches over Israel as a nation, and over all the course of human history, but cares for the individual. This statement has to be qualified by adding that at first the nation as a moral unit, and within that the family as a unit, almost filled the field of moral vision, but not quite. The moral independence of the individual was not expressly recognized till a late period, as by Ezekiel and Jeremiah ; but this does not mean that it was not recognized implicitly. Moral solidarity and individual responsibility are concurrent factors always and everywhere present in life. We read that the anger of the

Lord was kindled against Israel on account of Achan's sin. To-day we might equally well say that the anger of the Lord is kindled against England on account of individual sins of exactly the same sort, that are tolerated among us. We are collectively responsible for them, and in God's Providence are so treated. Achan realized his own responsibility when he said, 'I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel.' The Old Testament abounds in stories of the way in which Providence trains the individual. The story of Jacob shows how God's wise chastisement turns a man's sins against himself, educatively. So Jacob 'changed, and came to loathe His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself Bright from his old dark life,' and at the last gratefully acknowledged the God who had been the Good Shepherd all his life through, the angel who had redeemed him from all evil. The story of Joseph shows us a man whom no misfortune could turn from serenity, courage, and goodness. He said to his brothers, 'God sent me into Egypt to preserve life, and to save you by a great deliverance. You meant evil against me ; but God turned it all to good.' As a study of character, nothing could be more instructive than the history of David. He was a man of the highest courage, resource, and patriotism, a great friend, loving and beloved all his days, in many ways an ideal ruler, and so far a man after God's own heart. On the other hand, he was continually involved in a network of intrigue and misery, both privately and in national affairs, and all, directly or indirectly, because of the accursed institution of polygamy. Here nothing is glossed or concealed, and this fact, here and throughout the Bible, of absolute fidelity to moral issues, casts a steady light on the ways of Providence in the individual life. In this connexion, there is an inimitable touch in the book of Jonah, where God shows the prophet that He does not think in terms of national passion and prejudice, but in terms of little children —yes, and even of cattle.

God in Creation and Providence

Jehovah is the Creator, and His full transcendence as Creator is everywhere recognized. Through His word, and through His wisdom, and through His Spirit, the worlds were made. The created world is ordered in all things and stable. In every part of it God's good purpose rules. The Creation is described in Genesis as a graded process, culminating in man. ' He formed the earth to be inhabited.' Everything was planned. He ' meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.' The writer was not thinking of foot-rules, and quart-measures, and scales, but of the exact order that reigns. If we like to say that God ordained the atomic weights of the elements, we are not therefore supposing Him to be a chemist. Moreover, creation is still going on. In that fine comment on the Creation story, Psalm civ., where God's creative work is described from the point of view of Providence, we read, ' Thou gatherest in their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created ; and Thou renewest the face of the ground.' Here each new generation of living creatures is newly created. Much is said about the provision of God for the life both of animals and man ; the instances are too many for full quotation. ' The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.' In this connexion ideas of cause and purpose are everywhere present, and it is taken for granted that such cause and purpose are personal, and reveal everywhere God. Davidson says, ' Two beliefs characterize the Hebrew mind from the beginning : first the strong belief in causation—every change on the face of nature, or in the life of men or nations, must be due to a cause ; and, secondly, the only conceivable causality is a personal agent.'[1]

No doubt this idea is stated in a too uncompromising form in the moral realm, as in Isaiah xlv. 7 : 'I form the light and create darkness ; I make peace and create evil ; I am the Lord, that doeth all these things.' Sin and the results of sin are not clearly separated. Hardness of heart does, in the divine order, result from steady disobedience ; but nowhere in the Bible is God made the author of man's disobedience. Upon the main point—that in the physical world, and in the order of Providence generally, God is always there, on the spot, in touch with the individual, free to bless or to chastise—the Hebrew thought is, on the whole, more religious than ours. We think so much in terms of law and force and machinery that we find it difficult to understand how God can answer prayer, or do anything effectively for the individual. But here, we believe, popular thought is nearer to the position of the Bible than that of the philosophers and scientists, and has a more immediate awareness of God's presence in life. The philosophic scientist cannot really work without a personal cause, but he hides it from himself under impersonal names.

One very important aspect of God's creative work as it is set forth in the Bible, is that it is always definitely connected with the moral order ; the two are one and inseparable. That is why physical disasters are so often set down as punishments for sin. God certainly sent them, and the only way to account for His action was to suppose that He was angry with His people. Our Lord traversed this theory when He said that the men on whom the tower in Siloam fell were not more sinful than others, and when He said of the man born blind that the disease was not due either to his own sin or that of his parents. But the ruling doctrine of the Old Testament is that the power of the Creator is always used in mercy, for the purposes of His grace. This is seen often in the Psalms : ‘ Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord . . . which turned the rock into a pool of water,’ and this to quench His people’s thirst. ‘ He telleth the number of the stars . . . He healeth the broken in heart.’ ‘ The earth trembled and shook ; Thy way was in the sea . . . Thou leddest thy people like a flock.’ ‘ O God, thou art terrible out of Thy holy places : the God of Israel, He giveth strength and power unto His people.’ ‘ The Lord sat as king at the Flood . . . the Lord will bless His people with peace.’ Here and elsewhere the tremendous power of God is realized, not as overwhelming and terrifying, but as the guarantee of mercy and blessing for His people. This general principle may throw light on the meaning of the Book of Job. It has always been a difficulty that the only argument, if it is an argument, that is assigned to the Almighty is an uncompromising statement of His creative wisdom and power, on the grandest scale ; and yet Job is completely calmed and satisfied by it. But if it goes without saying that that power is always used graciously towards men, perhaps Job has been too hasty in his protests. If he waits a little longer, and trusts that infinite power to the uttermost, he may find that blessing was purposed even in the disasters of his life. And so it turned out.

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[1] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii., p. 198.

We may put the principle in this form, that God the Creator is faithful as Creator. In all His dealings with His people His purposes of grace are unchanging. They may think they are at the mercy of the great world-powers, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria—Israel was tossed between them like a helpless toy. But the prophets never saw things in that light. ‘ The nations are as a drop of a bucket.’ To Israel, languishing in captivity, the message comes, ‘ The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not,’ and to those who wait for Him every kind of strength will be given, to meet every need. To rescue that little scattered remnant of His people, there is operating the entire energy of the almighty Creator. ‘ Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens . . . I will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.’ Cyrus is His appointed agent for the redemption of His people. ‘ My hands have stretched out the heavens . . . I have raised him up in righteousness . . . he shall let my exiles go free.’ And it is all summed up in these words, ‘ Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob . . . I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine.’ This principle may be extended from the nation to the individual ; and we have full warrant for this in all that we see of the actual history of so many of the called of God in the Old Testament. ‘ For that he is strong in power, *not one* faileth.’

The glories that compose Thy name
Stand all engaged to make me *blest.*

We get straight from the Creator to the least of all His creatures. The Old Testament view of the faithfulness of the Creator is largely replaced in modern thought by the principle of the Uniformity of Nature. This is the expression of a great truth ; but unfortunately it can be, and is, so used that it has the practical result of denying that God can effectively care for the individual. For religion, the Old Testament view is the richer and the truer ; the other is only paralysing, unless it is taken as a merely secondary aspect of God’s providential government.

The Problem of the Individual

In the Old Testament, the problems of Providence in relation to the individual are ever more keenly felt.

The standard teaching is exactly expressed in the first Psalm. If a man delights in the law of the Lord, then 'whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.' Riches and honour, children and length of days, are his portion. 'The wicked are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.' In both particulars this doctrine is challenged in the book of Job. Job asks, 'Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, wax mighty in power?' 'How often is the lamp of the wicked put out?' He himself, who had honoured God in all his ways, is treated as the worst of sinners: 'the just, the perfect man is a laughing-stock.' In the great debate, including Elihu's speeches, every side of the question is argued out, as far as there was then light given. It is true that in the end the original doctrine seems to be the only one available; for Job is restored to greater earthly prosperity than he had before; but some things have emerged that are of great importance. God is not really indifferent and unjust. He has had everything under His control from the first, and it works out finally for good. We have seen that a man *can* hold fast his faith in God, even though He seem to be unjust, can even say, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'[1]

Again, there are gleams of the truth that is in the end going to give real help, and throw light on all the mysteries of Providence—namely that there is a hereafter of perfected fellowship with God. In Job this is only a gleam, a far-off hope, but it is a ray of the true light. Perhaps the most significant of all, we see established man's right to inquire, to protest, if need be to rebel. After all Job's wild and whirling words, and his misunderstanding of God's true purpose, he is justified. God wants no insincere defenders, and does not resent honest doubt. He says to the friends, 'Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.'

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[1] Job. xiii. 15. That is the spirit of the passage, whatever the exact translation of Job's words.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, pessimism runs riot, not, of course, reasoned and final pessimism, but a state of hopeless confusion about the meaning of life. 'All things come alike to all : there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.' There is no good in anything, 'the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.' There is no hope : 'that which has been is that which shall be.' The only practical wisdom seems to be to make the best of things as one finds them, 'for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.' This is the mood of Omar Khayyâm, without his serenity, but, we must add, without his atheism. What makes the book so perplexing is that there is another voice, in which the fear of God is said to be man's true wisdom. 'It shall be well with them that fear God.' The two last verses, in particular, give the book a higher tone. Man's whole duty is to fear God, and keep His commandments ; for God will bring every work into judgement. The two voices are so much at variance that it is really impossible to harmonize them : they seem to belong to quite different people. Whatever the explanation of this may be, it was as a *whole* that the book found its way into the Old Testament, and as a whole it is to be studied. It must have come from a period in which the social and political conditions were exceptionally difficult and discouraging. Nothing seemed worth while ; one had better face the facts. Hope was a mockery beside the utter futility of life. Yet there was a God, and one must hold on to that, even if His ways were past finding out. As one commentator says, it is in the Providence of God that this book is found in the sacred canon. It brings out very clearly the need there was for more light. The shadow of a half-despair could only be dispelled by the coming into human experience of a fuller life, and of the sure and confident hope of the gospel.

The Preparation for the Gospel

In the interval between the Old and New Testaments, in one important matter a very real advance was made in religious thought. In despair of the political future of the nation, the messianic hope was by some thinkers abandoned, and for it was substituted the hope of an overwhelming divine intervention, by which the present order would be destroyed, and a heavenly kingdom established, in which faithful Israelites would be blessed, and sinners terribly punished. Further reference will be made to the apocalyptic literature in a later section.[1] To what extent it was popularly known it is difficult to say ; but evidently belief in a personal resurrection was widely spread. Martha could say of her brother, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' The Pharisees had definitely adopted this belief, as against the Sadducees, who denied it. Paul cried out in the Sanhedrin, 'I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees, touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.' Here was a great gain for religion, and a preparation for Christianity. Plainly it brought a completely fresh orientation to the ideas about Providence.

In the Advent of the Lord Jesus we have an illustration of the operation of God's Providence on the widest scale. 'When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son.' Any idea that Jesus was the product of His age is quite out of the question. The spiritual growth of the nation had to a great extent been brought to a standstill. The voice of the prophets had long been silent. The priesthood had become a sort of commercial syndicate. The strength of Judaism was in the Law, but religion under the rabbis was being bound in fetters of iron. The popular messianic hope was fanatically national, and was leading the nation straight to destruction. The Lord's Christ did not emerge from any such confused conditions : He came down from above. The need of the world outside Judaism was religiously as great as within it. Philosophy had attained a very high level, but, however noble many of its thoughts, it had hardly touched the common life of men. The great heathen systems, or rather national variants, of polytheism, had got merged into one another in the great cities, and there was utter confusion there. Men were seeking individual salvation in the dramatic symbolism of the mystery-cults. Everywhere the need of religious help was urgent. At the same time conditions were being created uniquely favourable to the rapid spread of the gospel. The Jews of the Dispersion were an organized nation in all the great centres. The spread of Greek culture had made the Greek language the lingua franca of the world. The Old Testament had been translated into Greek, and was accessible to inquiring men everywhere. Such men were brought into touch with its great ideas, unprejudiced by the rabbinical tradition, and so were prepared for fuller knowledge. The Roman imperial policy had welded the Empire into unity. Through all the provinces great roads were made, the seas were cleared of pirates ; and so organized travel was everywhere practicable. Only under such conditions could the gospel have made such rapid headway. The fullness of the time had indeed come. A generation later, the work of Jesus in Palestine would have been impossible. Nor did the favourable conditions in the Empire continue very long. Rome was like a giant with a weak heart. The genius of Julius Caesar and Augustus had, just before our Lord's time, created the Empire ; but it soon became the prey of military adventurers, and was seriously crippled by the successive attacks of the Northern nations. But before this happened, at the most propitious time, the message of the gospel was launched on its way, the Lord made bare His arm, and the ends of the earth saw His salvation.

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[1] See pp. 260 ff.

Providence in the New Testament

In the teaching of Jesus and its development in the New Testament, three elements have directly to do with the question of Providence—the Fatherhood of God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the assurance of immortality. As Jesus sets it forth, the Father's love and care are extended to all alike. ' He makes His sun to shine upon the evil and the good,' He feeds the birds of heaven and clothes in beauty the lilies of the field. His children should never be anxious about earthly supplies, ' Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' His children should freely make known their wants to Him, because the gifts are all ready and waiting for them : ' Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.' The heavenly Father is more willing to bless His children than the most wise and loving earthly parents can be. Even in the midst of persecution and peril, His disciples need have no fear, the very hairs of their head are all numbered.

The Holy Spirit is promised after Jesus has been exalted. He will be the guide of the disciples, even as Jesus was in the days of His flesh. He will lead them into new truth. Many things of Christ there are which they cannot now receive, but then they will be made clear. The fact of immortality is stated with perfect clearness, and, one may say, is personally guaranteed by Jesus. ' In my Father's House are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you ; for I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also.' The entire object of His coming was to bring many sons unto glory, and how could He deceive them, or leave them in doubt about the central thing of all?

The effectiveness of the providential guidance is illustrated at every point in the history of our Lord's work on earth and in the course of the founding of the Christian Church.

The coming of Jesus into the world is the fulfilment of all God's promises to His people, and the vindication of His goodwill towards them and all mankind. For Jesus, the sense of His vocation was ever present, and to all that it involved He willingly dedicated Himself. Three times, at hours of spiritual crisis, there came a voice from heaven responsive to His self-surrender. He could say of the Father, 'I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me.' From point to point He went on, as the guiding Spirit indicated, towards the completion of His work. When the hour came, He was ready to lay down His life; but until then, no one could touch Him, neither the angry mob, nor the plotting Pharisees, nor 'that fox' Herod. In the meanwhile God was always with Him, and His prayers were always heard. His supreme work was to give His life to win men back to God. That was His free gift, and the Father's commandment also. There could hardly be a more complete misreading of the Gospels than to suppose that Jesus never expected to die, but looked to be saved at the critical moment by God's intervention, and even challenged it by going up to Jerusalem. In the words, 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many,' He almost overtly accepts the way of the Servant of Jehovah set out in Isaiah liii.; and in that most richly inspired passage He would find beforehand the rationale of the Cross.

All through the tragic stages of the betrayal and trial and crucifixion He moves as one who knows His way, and has complete command of the situation, until at last the great task is accomplished, and the Father has received His spirit.

In the Acts of the Apostles, everything takes place on the initiative and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit was poured forth at Pentecost, it was under His illumination that Peter spake, as later before the Sanhedrin. Stephen, ‘ full of the Holy Spirit,’ made his great defence. The Spirit moved Philip to address the Ethiopian eunuch, and afterwards carried him away to Azotus. The Spirit bade Peter go to preach the gospel to the Gentile centurion Cornelius. The Spirit moved the Church at Antioch to send out Barnabas and Saul on the first missionary campaign. The Spirit guided the Church at Jerusalem to grant the charter of Gentile Christian freedom.

The story of Paul is full of references to the Holy Spirit's guidance. The apostles were forbidden by the Spirit to speak in Asia, and by the Spirit were prevented from going into Bithynia ; and so were guided to Troas, and thence by a vision were summoned to Europe. Paul's last journey to Jerusalem was under the guidance of the Spirit, who revealed the afflictions that awaited him. The circumstances of the arrest in Jerusalem were so overruled by the Spirit that Paul was at last brought to Rome. Again, on the perilous voyage, it was the divine guidance that secured the safety of the travellers.

Always the divine guidance is conditioned by and responsive to prayer. The Bible is full, from end to end, of the experiences of praying men. Everything that God does for His people is in the closest relation to prayer. Abraham, Moses, all the prophets, live in the atmosphere of prayer. What great scenes those are in which Abraham pleads for Sodom, and Jacob wrestles with the angel, and Elijah bows his head on Mount Carmel. How great in prayer was Moses, with whom the Lord spake 'face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,' who could say, 'if Thou wilt forgive their sin . . . and, if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.' How extraordinarily bold Jeremiah is in prayer: 'Ah, Lord God, surely Thou hast greatly deceived this people.' 'Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee: yet would I reason the cause with Thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?' 'O thou hope of Israel . . . why shouldest Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save?' 'Do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory: remember, break not Thy covenant with us.' In the Gospels, our Lord's teaching about prayer is full and definite. Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. God is more willing to give than we are to ask. To believing prayer all things are possible. We are encouraged to pray in the name of Jesus, and to pray directly to Jesus Himself. It is all so simple and direct. 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' It hardly needs to be said that prayer was the means of the perfect communion which our Lord had with the Father. We have constant references to His habit of prayer. He could say, 'I know that Thou hearest Me always.' It was whilst the disciples were praying in the Upper Room that the gift of the Holy Spirit was bestowed. Paul's letters abound in prayers for his Churches, and he frequently dwells on the importance of prayer. He would have men pray at all seasons in the Spirit, persevering in prayer for all men, to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all they can ask or think.

[See also notes on 'Judgement,' Appendix iv., p. 259, and 'The Ministry of Angels,' Appendix v., p. 267.]

APPENDIX

I

GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE

Philosophy, accepting, as we all must, some sort of Reality, takes as its postulate the unity of that Reality ; at least, the tendency seems all that way, and not towards dualism or pluralism. A perfect logical system is the goal of philosophy, just as a perfect mechanical system is the goal of science. Thus, interpreting unity in a purely intellectual way, philosophy reaches an 'Absolute.' This Absolute may be wholly material, like Haeckel's ether-continuum ; but far more generally it is taken as spiritual. In the former case, all mental and spiritual factors are temporary epi-phenomena, in the latter, all finite things and persons may be more or less real or unreal 'appearances.' According to Mr. Bradley's philosophy, all appearances have some degree of reality ; but in the Absolute they are all 'transmuted' ; and what they then become it is impossible to imagine : they seem to be transmuted out of existence.[1] '*As such* the Absolute neither acts nor suffers, nor loves nor hates, it has no needs, desires, or aspirations, no failures or successes, friends or enemies, victories or defeats.'[2] Well may James call such an Absolute a 'metaphysical monster.' What this philosophy can never explain (as far as I know, does not try to explain) is how the Absolute ever lapsed from its native perfection into the manifold entities of a finite universe. Nor can it show any way of return, nor tell us when it is going to happen ; for if the Absolute can tolerate such lapses now, why not always ? Nor can we see how the Absolute will be enriched by the transmutation of finite entities in it ; seeing that it is eternally perfect, and never needed any enrichment. Of course, in this scheme personality disappears along with every other determinate whole. This Absolute is not personal, and has no room for finite persons in its ideal structure, if it has a structure.

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[1] Yet Bradley says, 'Higher, truer, more beautiful, better, more real—these, on the whole, count in the universe as they count for us' (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 550). I cannot suggest an explanation of the discrepancy, except that, as I have long thought, there are *two* Mr. Bradleys.

[2] James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 47, 48.

The most convincing way of stating the idealist position is to describe the Absolute as 'a conscious life which embraces the totality of existence, all at once, in a perfect systematic unity, as the contents of its experience.'[1] Thus Reality is a spiritual system, of which the elements are spiritual systems. This Absolute is above time and is not a self. It may be a society of selves ; in which case God may be a self, and thus finite. Here it would seem to be quite unwarrantable to call a society of selves a conscious life. It is equally unsatisfactory to think of the Absolute as a pervading spiritual influence, a sort of world-soul. Nor is it admissible to regard the whole of things, culminating in humanity, as evolving towards an Absolute. 'Is it not both absurd and blasphemous to suppose that the power which cradles and encompasses all our lives is not itself a living fact, and that it is reserved for man to bring the Absolute, as it were, to the birth ? '[2] It is evident that no doctrine of Providence could be extracted from such a conception, except in so far as it made room for a finite God.

A more promising view is to identify the Absolute with the Supreme Self, that is, with God. Streeter says, 'The conclusion that the Universe is the expression of Mind is one of which the importance cannot possibly be exaggerated.'[3] ; and he regards this position as fully established in philosophy. 'The Universal Spirit, whose being gives reality to the objective world which we know in our experience, is most certainly personal.'[4] The physical universe, as well as all finite persons, exists as created and sustained by Him. In Him they all live and move and have their being, the Creator and Father in whose life they share. 'World-history is not something at which God looks on as a spectator or which He directs from above, but something in which He genuinely partakes.'[5]

Granting all this, it hardly makes for clearness to call the Supreme Self the Absolute : one is always liable to be influenced by the ultra-negative associations of the term. Alongside the Supreme Self there is room for finite selves and the material world. Creation implies the self-limitation of the Supreme Self. The creation of finite persons implies the manifold forms of the self-bestowal of love.

We should prefer to relegate the term 'Absolute' to a humbler position, and not to apply it to the Supreme Self. Philosophy deals with wholes, and needs a term which will include all Reality as unified in some manner ; and for this purpose the terms ‘ Reality ’ and ‘ Absolute ’ will serve equally well. They will include all degrees of reality, in which the Supreme Self is the dominant factor. For God, the universe is the object of His knowledge, and a sphere in which His dominance is exercised. So God *and* the universe[1] may be termed the Absolute Whole ; but as its constituents are so disparate, the term is liable always to be somewhat confusing. The universe includes three very diverse orders of being. The physical universe is a vast machine working under tremendous pressure ; but, as science holds, slowly and surely running down. The world of animate life has followed a very different course. The history of living creatures has been one of steady ascent, from the simplest one-celled organisms to man with his marvellous brain. Here biological effort seems to culminate. But interwoven with the life-history there is the mind-history, to whose unfolding the doors of the future are all open. Its possibilities are, in principle, inexhaustible. To assign the term ‘ Absolute ’ to the Supreme Self *plus* these three diverse orders of being is not very useful, after all. One might invent a term to cover the compound idea of an apple, an electron, and a fit of temper ; but it would illuminate nothing. And if you take *all* mental, vital, and physical facts and add them to the Supreme Self, you get no further by calling the whole the ‘ Absolute.’ The unity of idealism in its extreme form is really secured by the device of dissolving every finite entity in the Absolute ; and what results is nothing but the bare name.

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[1] Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 60.

[2] Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 206.

[3] Streeter, *Reality*, p. 127.

[4] D'Arcy, *God and Freedom in Human Experience*, p. 99.

[5] Moberly, *Foundations*, p. 510.

It seems inevitable that the idealism that fights shy of theism is bound to lapse into pantheism. The physical universe is an ordered whole, a cosmos, and finite ; and both its order and its finitude require the theory of creation by an Infinite Intelligence to explain them. If we say that the universe is its own explanation, we are landed in pantheism at once. Similarly, to speak of the universe as the perfect individual is confusing. It is collecting into one conception material and spiritual individuals whose relations *in* the universe are not due to one another, and very much need elucidating. We may distinguish grades of finite being, and so are led to give priority to self-conscious individuals as the most real entities ; and here, again, the theory of a personal Creator fits the facts the best. The alternative is to dissolve Him, so to speak, into an all-pervading spiritual tendency ; which again is pantheism. We have ‘ a sort of mystical unity, in which the identity and individuality of God and all other persons are lost.'[1] In Absolute idealism, all transcendence is barred out. In some sorts of idealism, it is difficult to know just what are the relations posited as between God and the Absolute. Webb says, 'God is more (not less) than the Absolute in so far as in religion I know (or at least feel) the Absolute to be in this respect—worshipfulness—more than by itself the abstract term Absolute expresses.'[2] With this Moberly, who quotes the passage (in *Foundations*, p. 519), agrees. He regards the Absolute as personal : 'So far is it from being impossible for the Absolute to be personal, that it is rather true that nothing else could be fully personal.'[3] These writers appear to employ the term Absolute as covering a complete intellectual explanation of all Reality, such as takes in other elements of experience than those which are religious : it is for these last that the idea of God is essential. The contrast is well put by Dunning : 'The Absolute is the goal of a purely intellectual search. God is the object of a personal quest, which we will name provisionally "faith." The philosopher must find unity whether personality is found or not. The saint, with certain exceptions, must find a personal objective, whether unity be found or not.'[4]

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[1] In some systems of thought the term ‘ Universe ’ is used to include God. We then have the Universe as comprising both God and all that He has created.

The reverse statement is also made, although to establish the same general position. Dean Inge writes, 'The God of religion is not the Absolute, but the highest form under which the Absolute can manifest Himself to finite creatures in various stages of imperfection.'[5] Dunning has the same idea : 'God, then, to speak the language of philosophy, is the *nisus* of the Absolute towards man, that which appeals to us and endeavours to draw us religiously towards the whole.' 'If it be asked, "Is God, then, only a part of the Absolute ?" the answer may be given, "Yes, in the way that religion in the greatest possible saint is only part of his entire life."'[6] For myself, I do not find these uses of the term Absolute helpful. In the term God, as theism uses it, everything is to be found to cover all the conditions of reality everywhere, in all its parts and relations. What a '*nisus* of the Absolute' can be, apart from the sovereign purpose of God, I cannot understand. A *nisus* is an operative tendency ; and to me the idea of several tendencies in the Absolute, of which God is one, is bizarre. Moreover, if the Absolute is personal, why not use the term God? Can the Absolute be personal in any sense in which God is not? And, if personal, *all* its meaning is included in that adjective.

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[1] *Foundations*, pp. 492, 493.

[2] Op. cit., p. 519, quoting Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, p. 254.

[3] *Foundations*, p. 504.

[4] Dunning, *God and the Absolute*, p. 12.

[5] *Foundations*, p. 519, quoting Inge, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 13.

[6] Dunning, *God and the Absolute*, pp. 78, 81.

It is in connexion with this subject that the idea of a 'finite God' has been much discussed in recent years; and such an idea is of much interest from the point of view of Providence. It has been reached both from the absolutist and pluralistic standpoints. For Absolute idealism, as in Bradley's and Bosanquet's works, religious experience has a high value of reality, but no final standing. These philosophers do not accept a personal Creator and Governor of the universe. On the other side, James and Schiller have well expounded the pragmatist point of view.

The finite God may be presented in a very indefinite description, as that God is 'the ideal tendency in things, believed in as a superhuman Person, who calls us to co-operate in His purposes.'[1] God is the most ideal portion of the Cosmic Whole, a wider self. from whom saving experiences flow in to the believer's consciousness. 'May not you and I be confluent in a higher consciousness, and confluently active there, though we now know it not?'[2] This is not satisfactory; it provides a God altogether inadequate to our religious needs. We cannot pray to a tendency, nor worship 'the most ideal portion of the Cosmic Whole.'[3] It is true that James accepts a personal, finite God; but he speaks often in the vague terms of a sort of distributed consciousness, an idea which is just as useless for religion as that of 'the absolutely totalized all-enveloper.'

For Schiller, God is (*a*) the non-phenomenal cause of the world-process, (*b*) the sustainer, as a factor in the interaction of ego and Deity, and (*c*) an intelligent, personal Spirit. From this it is deduced that God must be finite, or, alternatively, that 'infinite' means nothing in this connexion. The main philosophical issue has to do with the problem of creation. The world is not God; and finite selves are not God; not, properly speaking, parts of God. In different ways God transcends both the physical world and finite persons. But creation is limitation. To create *this* universe is to give up all the others that might have been created. To create finite persons is to make possible the opposition of such persons to the divine will. The mystery of creation is beyond our mental grasp, and probably always must be. What one can say is, that whatever limitation there is is within the will of God, and within the grace of God; and some sort of automony He must give to His creatures. Howison says, '*Unless creators are created*, nothing is created.'[4] Limitation, thus considered, is a mere

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[1] James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 124.

[2] Op. cit., p. 290.

[3] Cf., op. cit., p. 125.

[4] Howison, *The Conception of God*, p. 97.

façon de parler, and corresponds to no positive reality, any more than to say that God is limited because He cannot make black white. To speak of self-expression is nearer the mark than to speak of self-limitation. The ' infinity ' of God is only inconsistent with His personality, if it is taken in a spatial or mathematical sense. Rightly applied, it means the perfection of His being. He is perfect as the Supreme Person. In Him is perfect love, perfect goodness, perfect beauty, all-embracing truth and power. He will be infinite, not in merely spatial and numerical and verbal senses, but as at once immanent in all created entities, and transcendent of them.

However, the main difficulties in this connexion do not arise out of the abstract possibilities of creation, but out of the real discords and confusions that actually prevail. The pain and sin that extend so widely in the world appear to some wholly inconsistent with the omnipotence of God ; and from this they deduce a finite God. This non-omnipotent God is ' a sort of elder brother of all spiritual beings, vaster, wiser, more powerful than they, but not different in the nature of the relation in which He stands towards the sum total of being.'[1] Such a God is not the creator of all, whose creative action must have had in view the spiritual education of finite selves. He is more like one of the limited gods of polytheistic systems, or Wells's 'invisible King,' struggling on the side of men in the grip of an impersonal fate. As to the issue of the struggle, no judgement can be taken : ' It may be that the gulfs will wash us down : It may be we shall reach the happy isles.'

The ethical problem is difficult, both from a theoretical and practical point of view ; yet the solution is, in principle, clear enough. Pain and physical death are equally bound up with the perfecting of sentient life. All this has been already discussed. The main point of the argument, as we are here concerned with it, has to do with the term ' omnipotent.' The imperfections of life on earth are criticized from the point of view of an unrestricted abstract omnipotence claimed for God. But the real question is, what is right and fitting in the relations of a loving heavenly Father towards His children. The full answer cannot be given ; for the whole conception of life under these conditions implies that it is a discipline and a probation, the complete development and issues of which lie beyond this scene altogether. If we grasp the general principles and aims of God's government here, that is all we have any right to ask for. If more were actually given, as by some overwhelming and irresistible revelation, then the vital condition of all moral achievement would be annulled. Faith would no longer allure us to fresh efforts and nobler victories.

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[1] D'Arcy, *God and Freedom in Human Experience*, p. 90.

The interest of this theory for our study lies in this, that the pragmatist's view of a finite god is due to a desire to realize the nearness and friendliness of a god actively aiding us in our spiritual strife, immersed with us in all the rough and tumble of it. A god nigh at hand is what they seek ; and they refuse to grope in the remote and dark regions where the Absolute dwells. With this feeling we can sympathize. James ' prefers to think of God as finite, because it brings Him nearer ; theories which play with terms such as infinite, and immutable, are barren metaphysics.'[1] But all finite gods are only dim shadows of the True. Wells's ' invisible King ' can no more satisfy man's deepest needs than Zeus or Krishna. The insistent claim both of heart and mind is for a god who is all in all, and over all ; and we can never be satisfied with anything less august.

If earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

This does not mean that we claim to know God fully. In Hooker's words, ' our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not as He is, neither can know Him.'

When considering the Absolute, one element should be noted, namely its character of changelessness. However much the parts may change, the Whole cannot change. Here we have a purely static ground from which by no conceivable means can we get to the pulsing and dynamic realities of the actual universe. What concerns us much more nearly is that for theology God is always called unchangeable. But ' the life of God cannot be resolved into the timeless content of an Absolute Idea.'[2] God's perfection is not inaction. ' There may be progress in perfection as well as progress towards it.'[3] God is pure activity, continuous perfect life. As Sir Henry Jones puts it, God is the perfect in process, moving from splendour to splendour in the spiritual world. What is meant by God's unchangeableness is really His perfect self-consistency and the singleness of His dominant purposes. Such unchangeableness is entirely consistent with endless variety in operation. ' The greatness of God is an infinite versatility, rendering natural to Him an infinite variety of action, adapted to the infinite varity of needs and occasions.'[4] It is therefore ultimately perfection of character, and so perfect love. Now nothing is so

[1] Braham, *Ourselves and the Universe*, p. 192.

[2] Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 471.

[3] Op. cit., p. 475.

[4] Clarke, *Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 310.

dynamic and resourceful as love. It is ever planning new things, ever adapting itself to the needs of others, ever seeking to repair all losses and to lure to higher unities. It is characterized, not by a negative absence of change, but by an inexhaustible fertility of creative power.

II

DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE

Meaning of the Terms

In modern thought the terms transcendence and immanence play a very important part ; and it is not easy to adjust their mutual relations. In the preceding essay it may appear that the aspect of the divine which we call transcendence has been over-emphasized ; and some fuller exposition may be given, to justify the position taken. The use of the terms in philosophy is modern, though the ideas are as old as theology itself. The Old Testament is full of expressions of the divine transcendence. ‘ I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside Me there is no God.’ The fact of immanence is incomparably set forth in Psalm cxxxix. God, who is everywhere, both in His creative activity and His spiritual fellowship, is always leading His children in the way everlasting. Here is the perfect religious appropriation of the idea. Transcendence is the aspect of God as Almighty Creator, Father of Spirits, the infinite and eternal source of every kind of finite being, of all goodness, truth and beauty, in the finite order, Himself in His fullness far beyond all our thoughts. ‘ The immanence of God implies that God is everywhere and always present in the universe, that from no conceivable corner is He absent, nor is He separated from its life, but that He informs, inhabits, pervades as well as sustains and holds together the whole.’[1]

Thus these terms are an attempt to elucidate the relations of God to finite being ; in and for Himself they have no relevance. They are also correlative terms, each implying the other. The transcendence means that God is never to be lost in or identified with His creation ; the immanence, that He is never to be removed to some far-off region, out of touch with His creatures. A creator, to be a creator, must be transcendent, He must be infinitely greater than that which He creates ; and He must also be immanent ; for without His continually present activity created being would cease to exist. Always, in the finite universe, transcendence and immanence will both be operative, in some degree and mutual relation, at every point, at every moment.

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[1] Davison, *The Indwelling Spirit*, p. 9. Quoted in Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*, p. 79.

God's trancendence has been treated by Otto, in his book, *The Idea of the Holy*, as something absolute for religion. It signifies the ineffable wonder of the divine nature, before which finite beings can but bow in sacred awe. There is a very important truth here, though surely it has been pressed too far when God is regarded as ' wholly other ' than His creatures. We have examples of transcendence in the relation of an artist to his work, his genius creating out of very ordinary materials a thing of beauty. Man as a spiritual being transcends the physical conditions under which he lives, expressing himself through them and moulding them to his purposes.

God's transcendence is not spatial and quantitative. He is not outside the world, though He is more than all that is in the world. He transcends all His creatures, in that behind every one of them there is infinite wisdom and power ; and to Him every moment they owe their being and continuance. ' The glory of God's transcendence is that He is superior to the universe, in His greatness excelling it, but not in His remoteness separated from it.'[1] He transcends finite persons as being perfect love and goodness, ever responding to all their needs and efforts from His own inexhaustible nature. They are surrounded by His gracious care ; and their character and destiny are determined by their free acceptance of His loving guidance. There is no automatic immanence such as implies anything but complete responsibility on their part for being what they are.

In what follows, God's transcendence will be taken as denoting His activity as Creator and Person. The Christian doctrine of Creation accepts a transcendent originating act, or series of acts, or mode of activity, unique in character, and wholly beyond the reach of human thought. God is thus the supreme First Cause ; and what He has created and is creating He has created and does create for far-reaching and predestined ends. Wherever, therefore, truly creative action is at work, there is transcendence, as also wherever the divine purpose is recognized as moving forward to its goal. Definitely personal action is also primarily transcendent. It is the transcendent God who hears prayer and works in Providence. In prayer there is personal intercourse. Here will, thought, purpose, love are all active, both on the divine side and on the human. The answer may come through God's immanent activity in the material world, or through some special providence that goes far beyond this ; but the primary activity is fully personal, and so transcendent.

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[1] Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*, p. 113.

Immanence is, in the first place, the mode of God's action in the material order regarded as energy, or law, or process. For theism, such processes are modes of the divine action which are truly personal, though the energies involved seem to be inherent in the things themselves, and to work automatically. In the physical world, immanence appears as regularity, order, automatic mechanism. So science, generally, has to do with the immanent order, with ' second causes,' ' efficient causes.' It does not take into its purview the supreme First Cause, or Final Cause, or Personality, or original creative activity. From the point of view of theism, it deals with God's work, not as Creator, but as Maintainer of the created universe.

That there is a real difference between God's work of creation and that of maintaining what He has created we must accept. If we say that to sustain in existence is equivalent to continuous creation, there is a certain confusion of thought. 'To "create" properly denotes, not simply causing to be, but causing to *begin* to be. So understood, a " continued creation " would be a contradiction in terms. If the divine power were doing every moment what it did at first, it would require the creature to fall back at every moment into nonentity in order to be afresh called out of nonentity again ; and even that, of course, would not be continued, but intermittent, creation.'[1]

Secondly, immanence is seen in the evolutionary process, *as a process*. This is immanence of a different character from that recognized in the purely mechanical order. 'The fixity of mechanical construction absolutely precludes all possibility of its own spontaneous evolution.'[2] Nevertheless, the universe *does* evolve ; it has ' an inherent and inexhaustible plasticity,' an ' inherent capacity for limitless self-evolution.' For Turner, whose words are here quoted, this is assigned to the immanent influence of the Supreme Self. This aspect of immanence will be more fully noticed later on.

Thirdly, the divine immanence is operative in the realm of finite personal life ; here, again, in a still higher mode. It is seen in the maintenance of the stable conditions of the physical side of such life, but on higher levels in their spiritual relations. God's personal relations with men are in no way mechanical, any more than their personal relations with one another. God is immanent in finite persons, not as ' force ' or ' influence,' but as individual Spirit in fellowship with individual spirits. Platt says, ' We

[1] Dykes, *The Divine Worker in Creation and Providence*, p. 298.

[2] Turner, *Personality and Reality*, p. 162.

cannot transfer the idea of the divine immanence to the inner centres of our moral self-conscious activity without recognizing God in us in a sense distinctly higher than that in which He is immanently active in the order wherein we take our place as parts of physical nature.'[1]

Again, 'True immanence of God in human nature is the comprehending and reciprocal activity of personal unities, distinct but nevertheless intimately akin. It is not the interaction of abstract ideas, of isolated wills, or even of streams of emotional energies which is exhibited in the immanence of God in man. Rather it is the contact and fellowship of persons, each conscious of himself as he is of the other, who know and will and love in free but reciprocal intimacy.'[2]

Lastly, Christians have seen in the Incarnation the 'climax of God's immanence in the world'; but this is also the supreme act of the transcendent God, who sent 'His Son from heaven.' We must give full value to both aspects of the divine activity here.[3]

DEGREES OF TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE

From this rough outline of some of the various modes in which transcendence and immanence may be viewed, it appears that we must recognize something like a gradation of these two factors corresponding to the varieties of created being. In the physical universe God's immanent action is apparently automatic, and His transcendence absolute. If there is any freedom in the motions of atoms, it is of very small account. When higher modes of being appear, God's immanence takes on what one might call a higher quality; He has conferred on them a measure of finite transcendence, and so has more limited Himself. 'Relatively to matter and energy, Life is transcendent.' 'Relatively to the living organism, personality is transcendent.' 'Man as a spirit dwells in the physical world, and finds the sphere of his activities therein; but he transcends its fixed order by his own ethical assertion as a self-determining agent, personal and free.'[4] Garvie puts the matter thus, 'In the physical universe there is least expressed of God's essential being as spirit, and yet there is the unfettered exercise of His mind and will. In life there is more of God shown, but at the same time God limits Himself more in making life self-productive and self-regulative. The organism has its end, and the means toward that end in itself. In conscious personality God most fully discloses His nature, and yet most closely limits

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[1] Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*, pp. 260, 261.

[2] Op. cit., p. 275.

[3] Cf. *The Lord of Life*, pp. 200, 206.

[4] Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*, pp. 200, 201.

His own freedom. In making wills that can oppose His own He limits Himself most in giving most of Himself. What resembles Him least He controls most. The creature that is most akin to Him He leaves freest. In order most to fulfil Himself in His world He most empties Himself.'[1]

EVOLUTION AND TRANSCENDENT ACTIVITY

The question of the relation of God as transcendent to the evolutionary order is one which may be further explored. We hold that creation is typically transcendent divine activity. God has called the universe and all finite creatures into being, has conferred on them their existence and their powers. Now, when creation was regarded as an act once for all accomplished, it might be easily set down as due to God's transcendent activity, and all that followed as the maintenance, by His immanent activity, of the being originally conferred. Thus, for deism, God could be regarded as, having once created the world, far removed from it by His own superior nature. Or, for the 'preformation' evolutionary theory, He might be supposed to have actually packed into the original matter every form of being that was subsequently to appear. This last theory has been very generally abandoned in favour of that of 'emergence,' which accepts the new as genuinely new. Thus, for Lloyd Morgan, there have been 'hierarchical steps in advance.' The new is truly *emergent*, not an 'alien influx into nature,' but none the less *new*. There is creative advance, which is no mechanical resultant of the given precedent order. There is no doubt about the automatic working of the mechanical order ; but something more and something higher is continually appearing. Turner says that, in his view, 'the existents which successively arise are not only absolutely new, but are at the same time of a higher order, taken as a whole, than their predecessors.'[2]

The process of emergent evolution is a process of continuous creation ; it stands in contrast to the old idea of one phase of creative activity now long ended. It is, none the less, *creation*, and, to my mind, implies an operation, all along the line, of the divine transcendence, touching the creative order at each point of fresh advance. Repeating the phrases used above, we have in the physical order a complex automatic mechanism which, as mechanism, *cannot* evolve, which, nevertheless, does evolve. New creative energies come into it, are 'granted,' 'given,' and a higher grade of immanence is reached ; but always we must acknowledge a definite transcendent activity actually causing the higher grade of being. If all evolutionary advance is set down as due to the effective activity of the Dominant Mind, the Supreme Self, it seems necessary to recognize transcendence at the point or moment of the new emergence, just as much as to recognize the immanence in the ordered maintenance of the old with which the new is continuous and coherent. It is all continuous divine activity ; but the new in the created world corresponds to some particular action or development of the divine purpose. If the old is transformed and lifted to a higher status, surely the dominant, transforming Mind may be regarded as at that point transcendent. Wherever there is creative purpose at work there is transcendent action. This purpose, with the implied power to bring it to fruition, is the only true conception of cause. Thus whenever we find purpose causally active, even in the finite sphere, we have transcendent action, and so in all creative work in the human realms of morality, thought, and art. This is always single, unitary, unique, individual, never a resultant of any system, but a cause of all systems being systems.

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[1] Garvie, *The Christian Certainty Amid the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 148–9. Quoted in Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*, pp. 248–9.

[2] Turner, *The Nature of Deity*, p. 114.

It might be objected that to assign the new steps in evolution to the transcendent activity of God is to place Him in the ' gaps ' which science may some day fill up with its own mechanical explanation. The argument, rather, is that no mechanical explanation can ever account for the emergence in nature of higher grades of being. Science may some day fill up present gaps in our knowledge by finding more transitional forms ; but what we have to account for is the end-products, the most perfect embodiments of new creative ideas and energies. Somewhen, the new began to be ; and there must have been something special and particular in the cause of it. There are no gaps in nature, only in our understanding of nature. There may be advance by small steps, or by large ones : our problem is to account for any advance at all.

It is also to be remembered that, at innumerable points, the creative activity might have produced forms quite different from those we actually have. If this is not so, the suggestion of unlimited capacity for variation which the living world presents is pure illusion, and every kind of living creature is cast in a mould set for it before ever evolution began.

What is here suggested really amounts to a preference for reading transcendent action in the evolutionary order where usually, in philosophic treatment, immanence alone has been postulated, and this position is taken mainly on the ground that wherever *creative* activity can be recognized we ought to regard it as transcendent in nature. If this is not acceptable, we seem obliged to throw back the transcendent action of God to the moment when the most primitive type of matter came into being, all creative progress beyond that point being due to God's activity as immanent. We have, then, the unique activity of creating ascribed partly to God as immanent, and partly to Him as transcendent, which does not seem satisfactory. Moreover, the marvellous unfolding of successive stages of manifested purpose, the work of the Divine Artist, is more fitly thought of as directly personal, and so as transcendent activity.

This discussion is largely an attempt to justify the view taken of the problem of mutations in Chapter V, pp. 76, 77, and to give a rationale of the evolutionary process which will bring it into parallelism with the mode of the activities of the Divine Worker in Providence.

Most of what was there argued as to the significance of mutations took for granted the Neo-Darwinian view that all mutations are due to ' chance ' variations of the germ-plasm, and that nothing ever acquired in any individual somatic advance can possibly affect the germ-plasm.

Happily, the Lamarckian factor is now much more generally recognized by scientists,[1] as it always has been by philosophers. According to this latter theory, the initiative and effort of the individual *does* leave its mark on the germ-plasm, and acquired characters may be inherited. Here the creature is helping to carry forward its own evolution, and is handing on to following generations higher types of organisms. This may be taken as response to divine creative guidance. What the future organism shall be is partly determined by the fidelity of the present organism to its particular gifts and calling : the total result is given by the co-operation of this creaturely effort with the divine control and plan. In one direction, quite evidently, the superior dominance of the divine is seen—namely, in the attainment of beauty by those creatures which choose the higher path. For beauty can never be explained by natural selection alone, nor by any conscious effort of the individual organism. It is the prize of loyalty and the gift of God. It is the work of the Divine Artist superimposed on the finite effort of His creatures. The flowers may have been evolved through the effort to attract insects ; but there is more than that needed to account for their loveliness. The gorgeous array of some male birds may be a partial result of sexual selection ; but that could never account by itself for their sheer beauty. Here we are in the region of the transcendent.

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[1] See *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, *passim*, and *Galatea*, by W. R. Brain.

If the direct personal action of God in the evolutionary order is thus recognized, His ever-present activity in nature makes the theory of providential guidance of the individual in and through the natural order a simpler problem. The immanent, roughly speaking, is the natural, and the transcendent the supernatural ; though, of course, the natural is only the supernatural veiled, another mode merely of the supernatural. The supernatural, the personal, the transcendent, is always there, on the spot, and always equal to adjusting the immanent order to personal needs. Something new is not something strange. The new is continually emerging on the ground of the old, never contrary to it, nor annulling it, but fulfilling it. The stable foundation is always there, prepared and contrived to allow for endless new emergencies, to meet all needs.

We make room, in a similar way, for the miraculous in Providence. Just as new things may occur in nature, new things may happen in the order of Providence, events which do not, and could not, arise out of the ' antecedent conditions discoverable in nature,' but not any reversal of its order, properly speaking, only a new use of existing conditions to further some higher purpose of divine love for personal ends. Thus the personal action of God in creative evolution is perfectly parallel to His providential activity in the guidance of His children. Morrison, in a recent article, says, ' The whole story of evolution is a record of the successive emergences of the unprecedented, and it is generally believed that the process is still going on. So that there could not be, in the name of reason, any *a priori* ruling out of the miraculous.'[1]

The problems relating to the religious and the scientific views of the universe and of human life are dealt with in a most thorough and illuminating way by Rudolph Otto, in his volume *Naturalistiche und Religiöse Weltansicht.* This work is a comprehensive survey of the whole field of modern evolutionary science[2] in its relation to the religious outlook ; it has quite exceptional authority and value. Otto shows conclusively the complete inadequacy of all purely mechanistic views of Reality, and vindicates the right of way for religion, and the supreme value of the spiritual. Further than this he does not go. In fact, he says, ' To form clear ideas in regard to the actual relations of the infinite to the finite, and of God to the world, and of what religion calls creation, preservation, and eternal providence, self-revelation in the world and in history, is hardly the task of religion at all, but rather pertains to our general speculative instinct, which can only satisfy itself with the help of imagination.'[1] At the same time, it is allowable to make use of his findings when attempting to study more closely the problems of the relation of the transcendent to the finite ; and some passages may be cited which illustrate the discussion of the present section, (*a*) as to the emergence of what must be taken as *new* beginnings, and (*b*) the parallelism between the *new* in nature and the miraculous in Providence.

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[1] Morrison, ' Natural Law and Miracles,' *Expository Times*, vol. xli., p. 158.

[2] Up to 1907. For later developments reference should be made to McDougall's *Modern Materialism.*

On the problem of development, ' To recognize anything as in course of evolving does not mean that we understand its " becoming." The true inwardness of " becoming " is hidden in the mystery of the transcendental. The gradual origin of the highest and most perfect from the primitive in no way affects the specific character, the uniqueness and newness of the highest stage, when compared with its antecedents. For, close as each step is to the one below, and directly as it seems to arise out of it, each higher step has a minimum and differentia of newness (or at least an individual grouping of the elements of the old), which the preceding stage does not explain, or for which it is not a sufficient reason, but which emerges as new from the very heart of things.' 'Evolution does not diminish the absolute value of the perfect stage, which is incomparably greater than the value of the intermediate stages, it rather accentuates it.'[2] ' As a matter of fact, the first occurrence—undoubtedly controlled and conditioned by internal necessity—of crystallization, or of life, or of sensation has just the same marvellousness as everything individual and everything new in any ascending series in nature. In short, every new beginning has the same marvel.'[3] ' The vital processes and the marvels of evolution and development are examples of the way in which physical processes are constantly subject to a peculiar guidance, which certainly cannot be explained from themselves or in terms of mechanism, organization, and the like.'[4] It is this ' peculiar guidance ' which must always be allowed for in the evolutionary system ; and where *guidance* comes in, transcendence comes in. We have, to use Lloyd Morgan's phrase (quoted by Otto), ' new modes of activity in the noumenal cause.'

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[1] *Naturalistiche und Religiöse Weltansicht*, pp. 280–1. Translated into English as *Naturalism and Religion*, p. 362.

[2] Op. cit., p. 104., English trans., pp. 136–7.

[3] Op. cit., p. 40. English trans., p. 52.

[4] Op. cit., see p. 210. English trans., p. 276. In the third German edition, to which the references are given, this passage does not appear. Instead we read, ' If this twofold view of things is valid and necessary, the teleological view has equal validity with the causal. That which on one side is a system of causes and effects, is intelligible from within as an order of ends and means. Ends, entelechies, ideas rule and determine the issue.' If ideas and purposes rule, then the guidance is secure ; and why tone down the expression of the fact ?

On the parallelism of the miraculous to the emergence of the *new* in the evolutionary series, Otto remarks, ' The really religious element in belief in miracles is that it, too, in its own way, is seeking after mystery, dependence, and providence. It fails because it naïvely seeks for these in isolated and exceptional acts, which have no analogy to other phenomena. It regards these as arbitrary acts, and does so because it overlooks or underestimates the fact that they have to be reckoned with throughout the whole of nature.'[1] It is our suggestion that the *new* in nature, which always arises on the basis of what is already established, and marks the development of purposes already partly embodied in it, results from divine activity of a transcendent nature, comparable to that which is recognized in the divine guidance of persons. Here special providence and the miraculous have as stable a background as nature itself—namely, the unchanging purpose and love of God. Neither the new in nature nor the special in Providence are isolated or exceptional. They are equally moments marking some effective operation of the increasing purpose of the transcendent God.

III

PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

FOR religious thought the problem of personality is central. It is said that the idea of personality is being overworked ; but, in fact, it is impossible that it can be overworked, for all problems lead up to it. What is necessary is that it shall be properly understood and applied ; and I think that is the reason why so much attention is now being given to the subject. Christian philosophy must vindicate the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God in view of criticism from every quarter. Its method may be to begin with the Christian idea of God, and show it to be self-consistent, and as illuminating all other truth, or to begin with human experience in religion and ethics, in science and art, and to show that this experience has its only completely valid ground in a personal God. What is not permissible is to decline the inquiry. We must never refuse to think, for fear of having to re-think. ' There is no shielding God from the disturbances of science and philosophy.'[2]

On this point some extracts may be given from writers already often quoted in previous chapters.

[1] Op. cit., p. 41. English trans., p. 54.

[2] Valentine, *What Do We Mean By God ?* p. 140.

'Religion has often made the mistake of denying intellect and conscience their full rights, and forthwith they began their crusade for recognition.'[1]

'No branch of inquiry can afford to neglect other branches. Religion is the better for fellowship with science and philosophy. The comparing of results, the re-interpreting of meanings, the re-arranging of the parts will often yield a fuller understanding of the truth. Religion needs to be continually re-examining its doctrine in the light of new knowledge gained in other fields.'[2]

'You cannot shelter theology from science, or science from theology; nor can you shelter either of them from metaphysics, or metaphysics from either of them. There is no short cut to truth.'[3]

'Let the danger be what it may, the God of religion must be also the God of science and philosophy. And if the God presented by religion cannot meet all the genuine needs of thought, desire, and action, then religion must have failed to understand aright the true and living God.'[4]

'There are times when both science and religion must defer to the ruling of philosophy. But there are times when philosophy must submit to the authority of religion no less than to the authority of science.'[5]

'The only rational aim must be to show that the mind being as it is, and experience being as it is, the belief in God is a necessary implication of both.'[6]

Upon the most general relations of the three disciplines, Valentine says, 'Science does not study reality as a whole, but only definite aspects of reality. Philosophy studies reality as a whole, but only as it is related to intellect. Religion studies reality as a whole in its response to personality as a whole.'[7] 'Religion is a quest for reality. But so is philosophy—so is science—so is art. True religion differs from these in believing that somehow reality is God, and God reality.'[8]

Philosophy deals with the problems that lie behind all sorts of phenomena and experiences. Art, morality, history, science, and religion all have their philosophies. And all their provisional solutions run up into ultimate problems in the realm of metaphysics. The limitations of philosophy are due to its abstract methods. Theory dresses in neutral tints. The owl of Minerva flies only in the dusk.

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[1] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 28.

[2] Valentine, *What Do We Mean By God?* p. 84.

[3] Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 67.

[4] Valentine, *What Do We Mean By God?* p. 141.

[5] Op. cit., pp. 175–6.

[6] Bowne, *Theism*, p. 40.

[7] Valentine, *What Do We Mean By God?* p. 143.

[8] Op. cit., p. 34.

'The defect of a metaphysical system is that it is a neat little system of thought, which thereby over-simplifies its expression of the world.'[1]

Philosophy has a purely intellectual outlook. All it seeks is a system of logical consistency. It seems to have an inveterate tendency to ignore or belittle personality. Finite persons become mere eddies on the surface of life's stream, and, if there be a God, He is only a bigger and more persistent eddy. But it does not follow that we can do without philosophy. The ultimate questions, about God, freedom, and immortality, are equally important for philosophy and theology. What is wanted is a better type of philosophy, in which personality comes to its own—what, in fact, is theism. There is no need to be afraid of metaphysics, for 'You cannot make the slightest concession to metaphysics without ending in a theology.'

Philosophy, in all its departments, is an attempt to think out into unity and coherence all the data of experience : what it can never do, is to create the data. Ultimately, all data of experience must be referred to individual personal subjects ; and these subjects, or persons, are the first realities. Philosophy is for them, and not they for philosophy. That is the best philosophy which best explains me to myself, and justifies my highest hopes.

By far the greatest difficulties for religious thought have been connected with the developments of science. Galileo had to retract his theory that the earth moved round the sun. Over this and the allied facts, controversy raged for years. A similar upheaval took place in religious thought when geology brought to light the age of the earth ; and, before this new truth had been properly assimilated, the theory of evolution came to add to the disturbance. The new science appeared to many to be the enemy of religion. There have been faults on both sides. Religious people have often refused to accept proved facts, and to adjust their minds to them ; whilst scientists, forgetting the limits of their province, and almost intoxicated by overdoses of fresh discoveries, have developed crude types of anti-religious philosophy ; but a better temper is abroad on both sides to-day.

The sphere of science is confined to the examination and classification of phenomena, the ascertaining of the relations that hold amongst them, and the laws that express the types of relation. As scientists, students have nothing whatever to do with the ultimate origin and values[2] of the facts they deal with ; and, whenever they take up such questions, they do so no longer as scientists, but as philosophers ; and as philosophers they must be criticized. Science treats of phenomena analytically, and deals with them all from the point of view of quantity. It is for ever trying to work out quantitative formulae corresponding to all the facts with which it is concerned. Even in studying organisms and minds, it abstracts from the individual, and explores their parts and ways of behaviour as types. When it studies wholes, it is as *typical* wholes. With individuals as such it has nothing whatever to do ; the particular unit is nothing to it. But the unit is just the centre of all values ; and so it is obvious that science cannot say the last word and the final word about the value and destiny of the individual. Ward says, ' Science has worked better the more abstract and ideal it has become, the further it has advanced from all semblance of concrete reality.'[1] Also, that the ' gigantic ' assumption of science is that everything qualitative in the world is ' subjective,' and everything objective is quantitative and independent of any subject. So the universe is a huge machine, and physical law one huge differential equation. Science has, therefore, from the nature of the case, no means of dealing with the matters that are of the highest importance for religion—namely, the meaning of personality for God and for ourselves. At the same time, since science has discovered systems of law within phenomena, certainly true as general formulae, theistic thought is bound to bring its own conceptions into harmony with such systems.

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[1] Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 40.

[2] Science does not deal with *ultimate* values, because it is immersed in phenomena ; but, within its own sphere, it has a great deal to do with truth-values. These are sought out with high and austere fidelity.

Psychology is a science which has made great progress in recent years. Dealing with all the factors of thought, feeling, and will, it necessarily comes very close indeed to the matters with which religion is concerned. Psychology began by analysing the elementary factors of all mental action, but soon took up the study of special classes of human and animal behaviour, as it was bound to do. At the present time the psychology of religion has come to the front, and has already a great and ever-growing literature. Unfortunately, here, scientists have shown a great disposition to over-run their facts ; and in the name of psychology have made a frontal attack upon all religion. The idea of God is merely a ' parent-complex,' prayer is merely auto-suggestion. In spite of all this, who can deny that it is extremely important to understand the way in which our minds work ?

Psychology can never be a substitute for theology ; yet it can and must form a background for theology. But it is only a background. Like all sciences, it must start by accepting the phenomena it studies. If it attempts to discredit these facts, in the very act of studying them, it has altogether mistaken its province.

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[1] Ward, *Essays in Philosophy*, p. 192.

Psychology must recognize its proper limits. Pratt says, ' It must content itself with a description of human experience, while recognizing that there may well be spheres of reality to which these experiences refer and with which they are possibly connected, which yet cannot be investigated by science.'[1] He adds that, ' If the religious values are to any extent bound up with each other and with the rest of life by laws of relationship, it is of great importance for us to know what those laws are.' It follows that psychology may prove a valuable guide in religious education, just as it is in industry and in secular education. ' Psychology will enable the saint in many instances to separate the temporal from the eternal and the contingent from the necessary, but it is not psychology that can deny or affirm the ontological validity of a belief in God. A saint who happened to be at the same time a psychologist, would emphatically assert that what in the religious experience he analysed as a psychologist was not what he as a saint enjoyed.'[2]

In view of the importance of the subject, and by way of illustration, reference may be made to the religious experience called ' conversion.' About this, following James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, an endless stream of writing has flowed. For psychology, the moral problem presents itself as the reduction of the manifold purposes of life from discord to harmony, the unification of all the elements of life in the service of goodness. That which frustrates all moral progress is the experience of a divided self. Whatever be our special temperament or endowments, our supreme task is to bring all the purposes of life into harmony in the pursuit of one dominant aim. Here is the problem set out in psychological terms. The function of religion is that it offers us a goal of absolute worth, namely, the will of God and the establishing of His kingdom ; and it offers us as the means of attaining that goal the personal help of God, whose Holy Spirit may inspire and energize all our efforts towards that goal. ' Conversion ' is the experience in which our life is thus unified, and its powers harmonized and brought into line with the divine will. For some, this experience is a sudden and drastic change, standing out in their life with dramatic vividness, and cutting off the new life from the old in complete contrast. It is coming out of darkness into light ; it is being born again. In many cases, this sudden change issues as the climax of a long process of preparation, by way of doubt or earnest consideration, as in the conversion of Paul. Far more often the unification of life and its dominant

[1] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 42.

[2] Dunning, *God and the Absolute*, p. 16.

ideals is a gradual process, or at least not a catastrophic one. As new light is sought, and new possibilities are presented, the greater and higher aims are more and more fully accepted, until the trend of life towards the highest is definitely established. What we see here, and what psychology teaches us, is that the fully unified self is the only true self. Unless this is attained, nothing is attained, in the moral sphere. Our Lord's words, 'Ye must be born again,' express a universal moral fact. Without this, we never become moral in the truest sense. What Jesus really said, I think, was, 'Ye must be born from above'; and those words not only put the fact of need, but show how religion meets the need. The only possibility of life's fulfilment is by power from on high.

The 'new man' may be formed by processes as gentle as when the sun woos the flowers into blossom; but the call is there, and the necessity is there, for every man; and no evasion is possible. If things are merely allowed to drift, the drift will be towards a selfish, conventional type of character (mere 'behaviour'), which is of low quality, and simply misses the mark; it is a life gone astray and lost. Again, the two types indicated above, the 'once-born' with their steady achievement, and the 'twice-born' with their tremendous struggle, are the outside types. Between these come experiences of many kinds of effort, and many less violent crises of conversion. I think in ordinary lives there is rather a succession of conflicts before complete victory is won; and I think we all have to engage in some rearguard actions with the beaten enemy.

It is also a plain psychological fact that the years of adolescence are the chief years of crisis. For nearly all persons, the great questions are faced and decided in those few years, and the character as a whole determined. We have had this fact stressed and overstressed; so that it has been asserted that conversion is almost impossible in later years. Now, for religion, all this psychological study makes one or two facts very plain—that conversion is, so to speak, natural and inevitable, as a supremely important moral and religious process, and that normally it comes in the adolescent period. What religion gives is its gospel of deliverance and hope, offering a power fully adequate to the needs of the growing personal life, offering a personal Guide and a heavenly Goal. Religion has the right to use the findings of psychology to emphasize the importance of an early and definite choice of the only true Way; but psychology has not the right to dictate the measure of the grace of God. That grace is able to break the bondage of evil, however long it has continued, and however firm its hold. In all this psychology throws a great deal of light on the conditions under which grace has to work ; but it has nothing at all to say as to the great positive factors and powers of the religious sphere. It maps out the spiritual field within which Providence carries out its gracious task ; but it does not close any avenue of approach by which the loving Father can reach and save any and every one of His children.

Science and philosophy can do their work, up to a point, without the postulate of a personal God. Their sphere of research is, properly speaking, God's field of action, not God Himself. They are not irreligious ; but they can never attain to the right to say that God is not. On the other hand, we cannot isolate religious thought from science and philosophy, and so try to escape from difficulties. God must be in harmony with His own field of action. There is *more* in the universe than mechanism, there is *more* in a man than his own successive thoughts. There is in both that which belongs to the infinite and the eternal. When all is said, we have to realize that there is more unsaid. ' We know in part,' we experience in part. It is no matter for surprise that many difficulties are as yet unresolved. Whitehead says that the universe itself ' is passing with a slowness inconceivable in our measures of time to new creative conditions, amid which the physical world, as we at present know it, will be represented by a ripple barely to be distinguished from nonentity,'[1] and, ' God is the one systematic, complete fact, which is the antecedent ground conditioning every creative act. The depths of His existence lie beyond the vulgarities of praise or of power. He gives to suffering its swift insight into values which can issue from it. He is the ideal Companion who transmutes what has been lost into a living fact within His own nature. He is the mirror which discloses to every creature its own greatness.'[2]

So we may say that the science which begins with phenomena, if it philosophizes truly, will leave room for God ; and philosophy which begins with reality can only do justice to its own chief postulate if it finds rest in the Living God.

IV

JUDGEMENT

THROUGHOUT the Bible ideas of judgement are very prominent, and about them a great deal of controversy has gathered. In whatever way judgement is conceived of, it is as a necessary vindication of the righteous government of God, and of the whole moral order. In the Old Testament, it is chiefly set forth in connexion with the Messiah, and the ‘ Day of the Lord.’ A clear-cut picture is given in Isaiah xi. of the Prince of the House of David, who ‘ shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.’ He judges the poor righteously—that is, he vindicates their cause ; and with the breath of his lips he slays the wicked. In his days there will be a state of universal blessedness and peace on earth. All nations will share in it ; for ‘ the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.’

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[1] Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 144.

[2] Op. cit., p. 139.

The meaning of the ‘ Day of the Lord ’ seems to have been originally that of a decisive intervention of Jehovah for the defeat of Israel’s enemies ; but Amos turned the meaning in the opposite direction, and said it would be a day of God’s judgement on His own people. In Isaiah, the day appears as a crisis of sifting, ‘ a day of the Lord of Hosts upon all that is proud and haughty,’ a day of disaster for Judah and Jerusalem, of judgement for the judges themselves. For the remnant that escapes the judgement, there is a new glory, when the Lord has purged His people ‘ by the spirit of judgement, and by the spirit of burning.’

As the political situation of the Jews grew darker, one school of thought abandoned all hope of a blessed earthly consummation of Israel’s history. The present age was too bad to be reformed ; and the existing order, or disorder, must be swept away by a tremendous act of divine judgement. The Judge is at the gate ; and very soon He will summon all men before His bar. The wicked will be punished by His avenging hand, and the righteous everlastingly rewarded. This view was very variously developed in the apocalyptic literature, of which the outstanding examples in the Bible are the books of Daniel and Revelation. These books were written to meet great emergencies : the former, the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to destroy Judaism ; and the latter the attempt, especially of Domitian, to destroy Christianity. As to the Jewish apocalyptic literature generally, it may be said that it embodies no coherent system of thought. There is no agreement as to whether the perfected Kingdom is to be on earth or in heaven, as to whether the Messiah will come or not, what sort of resurrection to expect, and who would rise, and who would be the judge, God or the Messiah, and what would happen finally to the ungodly. In general, we may say that orthodox Judaism ignores this whole cycle of speculation. Apocalyptic thought was not, as a whole, concerned with the destiny of the individual, though it is more or less implied. In Daniel, some only rise to glory and some to shame. In the New Testament, the judgement is definitely individual, but it is also universal, and will be consummated at the Great Day.

The problem is to determine how far and in what sense the Christian Church adopted apocalyptic ideas, and especially what was our Lord's relation to them. There is no question at all that the New Testament is full of apocalyptic ideas and imagery, nor that in our Lord's teaching, as we have it reported in the Gospels, it is everywhere present. At the present time two schools of thought have emerged, one of which makes the apocalyptic idea central and all-dominant in our Lord's teaching and work ; the other denies this out and out. Naturally, both schools have to eliminate from the gospel record whatever clashes with their general theory. This method is carried out with such rigour that it leaves hardly any common ground for discussion between the two. For instance, the passage in Matthew x. 23, ' Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come,' is the passage on which Schweitzer's theory pivots ; but it is rejected by the other side as not authentic. In the view of J. Weiss, Schweitzer, and others, Jesus despairs of His age, and looks for a very speedy intervention of God to end it altogether. For Him, the Kingdom is in no sense present, but soon to be revealed. All His ethical teaching is merely to tide over the short interval that precedes the end : there is nothing universal about it. He went up to Jerusalem with a high resolve to force God's hand, and secure His immediate action. He believed, not that He was Messiah, but that He was *to be* Messiah, after God had so intervened. His judgement was wrong : God did not intervene ; and Jesus died disappointed and despairing. Out of this situation we are expected to believe that Christianity arose, like a phoenix out of its ashes, with a message of hope for all mankind.

We must follow a less drastic method, and try whether there may not be a better way of dealing with the apocalyptic aspect of our Lord's teaching. It would seem to be a great mistake to try and sweep away the many solemn words of Jesus about certain and imminent judgement, both for the individual and for the nation ; but neither can we suppress the other strain in His teaching, in which the Kingdom is actually present, and may be entered then and there. After all, Jesus had a gospel ; and a message of judgement is hardly a gospel. Jesus came with a new revelation of the wealth of the Father's love, which only needed to be appropriated to bring blessing in the present and hope for the future. He sees in every man the promise of goodness ; and in His works of mercy and grace He brings it to fulfilment. Everything is possible. God's grace is inexhaustible ; men have only to ask and to receive. Far from despairing of His age, Jesus believed that, with such a vision of God as He had, the whole nation might, before His eyes, be born again. There was no hindrance on God's side ; and for men all things were possible if they had faith.

But there is another side ; and what actually happened was that the good news fell on deaf ears. Jesus truly said, ' I came not to judge the world, but to save the world '; and yet His coming constituted a judgement. ' This is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light.' So Jesus realized that His nation was throwing away its offer of grace. ' Alas for you, Chorazin, alas for you, Bethsaida. . . . It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement than for you.' Jesus saw plainly that unless the nation changed its temper altogether, it was doomed to swift destruction.

Beyond any such immediate judgement, arising out of the unbelief of that generation, Jesus laid claim to a universal commission of judgement. ' As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son to have life in Himself : and He gave Him authority to execute judgement, because He is a Son of man.' As man, coming with a new revelation of God's love, and with the power of an endless life, He is necessarily judge ; for as men accept or reject Him, they judge themselves. A man is judged who repels love, in whatever form it is offered, and how much more if he slights the love of the divine Friend ? There will come an hour when each of us will stand before the judgement-seat of Christ. Only then shall we see the reality of our sinfulness, and the exceeding riches of His grace. In one sense, for the believer, judgement is past. He ' hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life.' In another sense, we have to live always under the shadow of the judgement to come. We are still on trial, still with the goal before us. We are to ' make our calling and election sure.' The crown is for those who are faithful unto death.

In the writings of Lily Dougall and Emmet, of which the chief is *The Lord of Thought*, it is urged that we must eliminate from our Lord's teaching, and from the Christian system, the whole conception of God as judge. This is taken to be an inheritance partly from the legalistic Jewish system, and partly from the apocalyptic literature. It involves a negative and barren conception of goodness, and a view of God as angry with sinners, which is a travesty of His true nature as infinite love. God's method is that of free forgiveness, not as punishing men for their sin, but rather sharing with them all its unhappy consequences. Everything that points to God's forgiveness as conditional must be rejected. One word runs, ' If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' Of this, the first half may be accepted, but not the second. This is confusing ; for the two halves really say the same thing.

This position involves two main ideas, the one that God's anger is entirely inconsistent with His love, and the second, that sin is followed, not by punishments, but only by ' consequences.'

No doubt God's anger has often been very imperfectly conceived, as, for instance, that He is angry with the children for their parents' sins, ' unto the third and fourth generation ' ; but Ezekiel entered his protest against that doctrine. He said that no man was judged for his father's sins, and that, if he repented, he was not judged for his own past sins. Ezekiel also said that if a good man fell into sin he would be judged for his sin, and that his past goodness would count for nothing. Ezekiel's statement is made in an extreme form ; but he did not, I think, intend to say that some momentary fall into sin would mean irrevocable doom for any man. His inner meaning is that God looks at a man's character. A bad man may become good ; a good man may fall away from goodness ; and by what he truly *is* God judges him. ' At any given moment, and therefore at the end, character fixes our place.'[1]

It does not seem wise to rule out anger from our conception of God. We express the matter sometimes in this way, that God is angry with the sin, but loves the sinner ; but this really means that God is angry with the sinner, so far as he is a sinner, yet loves him in spite of his sin. In fact, the anger is a necessary part of the love. We see very well how this works in human relationships. No one of us has the capacity for being angry with the vast number of sinners whom we do not personally know ; though even here anger against vast systems of evil has effected great things in humanitarian reform. But when one we dearly love falls into sin, our anger is proportioned to our love. We know so well what our friend might be and ought to be, that we cannot bear that he should dishonour his true self. We may willingly share the consequences of his wrong-doing ; and we feel ashamed for him, even if he is not ashamed for himself. We may have to treat him with great severity, perhaps to ' punish ' him ; but there is nothing of hatred or vindictiveness there : the severity is determined by the love. Surely it is not wrong to interpret the divine judgements on sin in some such way.

The other contention is, that there is no ' punishment ' of sin, only very drastic ' consequences.' In this way it is sought to eliminate the elements of anger and vindictiveness from the conduct of the moral order. Certainly many terrible things have

[1] Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, p. 185.

been believed about God, including ‘ the arbitrary infliction of punitive torture ’ upon His enemies. Ghastly pictures have been drawn of the unending physical agonies of the lost, viewed with complacency by the saints in bliss. All this is totally at variance with the most elementary morality, and above all with our Lord’s teaching about the Father. Charles expresses the truest religious feeling when he says that this is not a matter of doubt with many Christian people. ‘ They would hold it a dishonour to the God they revere and serve even to admit the possibility that He should visit with a never-ending punishment the errors and the shortcomings, nay more, the wilful sins, of a few dim and mistaken years of earth, and limit to a hand-breadth of time the opportunities and irremediable issues of a never-ending eternity.’[1]

But it is going to a far extreme to eliminate altogether the personal element from God’s dealing with sin judicially, and to refuse to talk of punishment at all. On this view, all the results of sin follow automatically the breach of law ; and in this connexion, the consequences of spiritual failure are treated as exactly on a par with those in the physical world. ‘ Ill-consequence, cruel as it seems, is the product of a vast creative method not acting with personal adaptation.’[2] ‘ The system of causation is evidently on a vaster scale, tending to vaster ends, than any system that could be exactly adapted in detail to the desert of each individual or group.’[3]

Surely moral education proceeds by definitely personal methods. Impersonal education of moral beings looks like a contradiction in terms. There is indeed a fixed order, ordained as the field of life and conduct ; but within that order individual action has to do the primary work. A child’s moral training is by means of the steady pressure of personal influence. Every right effort is met by approval, and the wrong by disapproval. To this, one would think, God’s influence on the individual through conscience corresponds. The child has also to learn by means of the outward consequences of his acts. This also has to be a guided process. The parents do not simply turn the child loose in the universe. They want him to learn the fixed operation of law and consequence ; but, if this were not done guardedly and gradually, the child would, in his ignorance, be prematurely injured, or more probably lose his life. Therefore there is a fire-guard put around the fire ; and razors are not given as playthings. But such risks are allowed as teach the child to be awake to danger, and not to trifle with fire or razors. On the moral side also, the conscience has to be educated, and the child taught the difference between right and wrong acts. This is effected partly by example and partly by discipline. The child has to learn that certain acts are wrong by finding that his parents are displeased with him. That displeasure may be emphasized by the infliction of penalties which are arbitrary, as far as the natural order is concerned, but not as regards the moral purpose they serve. This is only the preparatory stage of moral training, safeguarding the course of outward conduct, until the child's understanding is awakened, and the power of self-discipline attained. Then right is done because it is right, and not because of any consequences. In all this, both on the physical and moral side, the law of consequence is at work ; but its incidence is throughout modified by personal guidance. In human life, no doubt there are often serious defects in parental training. Punishment may merely reflect the parents' bad temper ; but true punishment has nothing of this about it ; it is cautionary and remedial.

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[1] Charles, *Between the New and Old Testaments*, pp. 131, 132.

[2] *The Lord of Thought*, p. 195. [3] Op. cit., p. 155.

May we not allow for similar relations between the Father and his earthly children ? May there not be here something like the control of consequences that we have ourselves, and a guidance that includes discipline ? What we may expect is such direction of our lives as may bring out the highest possible development of our powers ; and this will include permitting us to bear to the limit of endurance, and allowing us to suffer for our faults and follies and sins. There will be no need here and no possibility of penalty that seems ' artificial ' : it will all be ' natural,' but none the less personally ordered and controlled. Our Lord has taught us to pray, ' Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' If we are all under an impersonal régime of consequences, there seems to be no point in the prayer. What we need is to be guarded from trials that would be spiritually overwhelming, in our actual state of growth. That means special guidance in particular circumstances ; and, if it is not available, what does the prayer mean at all ? ' But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape.' Mackintosh says, ' Personally I regard all these suggestions of an automatic working of spiritual reality as thoroughly unsound, for which Bible minds, who knew what religion is, would have had no use.'[1]

It appears to me that all this may be described as a process of continuous judgement. In our thoughts and words and deeds we are judging ourselves and God is judging us ; but in the present order the operation of the divine judgement is often veiled. The incidence of ' consequence ' often appears to be quite wrong. Physical calamities overwhelm good and evil, old and young alike.

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[1] Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, p. 189.

Moral consequences appear to be equally erratic. The moderate sensualist may have a very good time on earth, whilst many of the greatest benefactors and lovers of mankind are life-long martyrs. One has only to think of the sorrows of a pure and noble patriot like Mazzini to wonder at the ways of Providence. There must be a day when the secrets of all hearts are made known, and the mysteries of God's grace also, when each man sees his life disclosed in the full light of God's holiness and justice and mercy. This means that for the individual death will be also judgement. To himself and to others he will be revealed for what he truly is. Whatever may be the conditions of the future life, it will bring a new and profound revelation both of oneself and God. Moral issues will no longer be veiled in any way. The meaning and justice of all earth's probationary trials will become unmistakably clear. The individual life will then have fresh moral tasks and opportunities which would have been impossible but for the period of earth's school-days.

There must also be a final judgement. We are members one of another, linked up indissolubly from the first generation to the last. The supreme purpose of God is a perfected humanity, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone of that great temple. Whitehead says that every electron makes a difference in the universe ; how much more, then, every person. What we are and what we have said and done has started influences and reactions in the universe which will go on for ever. This is true of every man. 'His life has become an eternal element in a larger whole, and maintains itself from generation to generation. But the complete effect and import of him, in this aspect of his existence, will not appear till our Race has reached its goal. It is this final valuing of a man, as a part of the complete Humanity, that we call the Final Judgement.'[1] The entire earthly history of humanity is an episode in the divine creative order. There is a day and an hour when that history will close ; and that Day is the day of the Last Judgement.

But judgement is not the final word : it is the valuation of the whole probationary period of life, that its fruits may be fully gathered in. 'He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold, I make all things new.' Charles says about this passage, 'The words are most probably conceived as pronounced from the great white throne at the close of the Final Judgement.' The fires of judgement are cleansing ; all dross is purged away ; and the pure gold remains, its lustre clearly manifested.

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[1] Leckie, *The World to Come, and Final Destiny*, p. 86.

V

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

It is doubtless somewhat rash to say anything on this subject : it has no interest whatever for official theology at the present time ; neither does unofficial religious thought tend in this direction. Whatever unseen ministry there may be is attributed to the activity of human friends who have passed beyond the veil. This is seen in the widespread cult of Spiritism on the one side, and, on another, in the Romanist and Orthodox practice of prayers to the saints, particularly to the Virgin and her mother.

In order to understand the way of Providence as set out in the Bible, we are bound to take account of the ministry of angels ; for both the Old and New Testaments are full of it. In the earlier episodes of Hebrew history angels often intervene. They are sent to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and others. Sometimes the angel is an actual theophany ; in any case, he seems to have a human aspect. In the New Testament, the angels are prominent in the stories of the birth and resurrection of our Lord ; and He himself frequently refers to them. In the Acts, an angel set Peter free from prison, an angel appeared to Cornelius, and to Paul on board the ship.

In the Hebrews, the status of the angels is discussed. They were the divine intermediaries in the giving of the Law ; but they could not have such an office in the greater work of redemption. He who was higher than all the angels became, not an angel, but a man, that so He might be a perfect mediator. His work accomplished, He has now a place in glory far higher than they, doubly honoured both as god and man.

The angels have a work to do, nevertheless, if not the chief work ; for they are all ‘ ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation.’ For quite different reasons, angelic beings play a great part both in gnostic and rabbinical speculations ; and the danger of angel-worship arose very early on in the Christian Church. It is rebuked by Paul in Colossians. Similarly in Revelation, the angel restrains the seer from offering him adoration. ‘ See thou do it not : I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus.’ For Paul, the worship of angels is impossible, because, equally with men, they belong to the sphere of the creative and reconciling work of the eternal Son.

If we touch on this subject at all, it is necessary to include the Biblical references to the evil spirits. The allusion in Genesis to the

‘ sons of God ’ allying themselves with the daughters of men belongs to a mythological cycle which need not detain us. In the Old Testament generally, there is surprisingly little that reflects the common ideas of primitive thought, for which every place was haunted by mischievous sprites of one sort or another. In Job, Zechariah, and Chronicles an ‘ Adversary ’ appears, whose intents may be evil, but who is strictly under God’s control. It was in later Judaism that there was a great development of speculation about the fallen angels, and the malicious activity of Satan throughout the history of Israel. It is in the New Testament that there are more references to the popular beliefs about demonic possession, and the vast hosts of evil powers who are the enemies of mankind. These were real entities to Paul, as to all people of his age. He says, ‘ Ours is no struggle against enemies of flesh and blood, but against all the various Powers of Evil that hold sway in the Darkness around us, against the Spirits of Wickedness on high.’ Nevertheless, they are not to be feared, because Christ has overcome them. ‘ He rid Himself of all the Powers of Evil, and held them up to open contempt, when He celebrated His triumph over them on the cross.’[1] As to our Lord’s succour of those supposed to be possessed by evil spirits, we can see that, in any case, He would be obliged to accommodate His language to current ideas ; but I doubt very much if the question can be so easily dismissed. There are contemporary phenomena reported from heathen lands for which even now the truest explanation seems to be that men and women can be controlled and possessed by some alien evil power. It is also certain that Jesus believed that He was in conflict with a great personal power of evil. The story of the Temptation implies this. ‘ The Prince of this world ’ was to Him no metaphorical expression. ‘ I saw Satan, like lightning, fall from heaven.’ ‘ Satan desired to have you, that he might sift you like wheat ; but I have prayed for you.’ I feel it very difficult to believe that on a fundamental matter like this Jesus could be mistaken. Where Christ is not known, the ancient fear still reigns ; but, as Christian influence spreads,

The old dragon, underground
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway.

It would be extremely unwise and presumptuous to rule out the possibility that there are other orders of finite beings besides our own, and that amongst them there may be both helpers and hinderers of our moral life. When our eyes are opened, we may discover that the wealth of personal systems is as wonderful and varied as we now know the physical universe to be. If we are allowed to imagine electrons, why not angels? We do not need the angels any longer to revolve the crystal spheres ; but they may have a good deal to do with the conduct of the creative order.

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[1] Eph. vi. 12 ; Col. ii., 15, *Twentieth Century New Testament.* And see Lightfoot’s comments.

It is a very old theory that sin came into the world from outside ; and there are many facts that point that way. In his work *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, Williams has dealt with this subject. His conclusion is that in the brute world as well as in human life there are elements of evil that spring from a common source, ' that evil in man is homogeneous with, and not explicable apart from, evil in the world at large.'[1] Thus he arrives at the idea of ' a corruption of the whole cosmic energy at some enormously remote date.'[2] He thinks of an original, free, personal Life-Source somehow spontaneously lapsing into revolt and sin. So cosmic history becomes a mighty struggle to regain the lost perfection, in which many orders of beings play their part. As sin originally shattered the universal harmony, grace will at last restore it, and, as Paul says, the Creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.

Probably no one realizes the difficulties of such a theory more than its author does ; but it is a serious attempt to face the facts ; and at least no one will suggest that a scholar so careful and well equipped, knowing all that modern psychology says about such things, is simply reproducing popular superstitions. However great its difficulties, the theory makes room for evil in various orders and degrees, both in the angelic and human and sub-human worlds.

Coming back again to the references to angels in the Gospels, we note the part angels took in the events of the Nativity and the Resurrection. Here everything is perfectly simple, and congruous to the situation. This, it may be said, is just poetry ; for such stories could not be told in any other way. But, after all, these things are not too beautiful to be true. We are told that at the close of the Temptation angels ministered to our Lord ; and that in the Agony in Gethsemane ' there appeared unto Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.' All this, as Edersheim points out, is altogether on a different plane from rabbinical conceptions, and could not be derived from them. The same consideration applies to our Lord's references to the angels. To Him, they are indeed ' ministering spirits ' ; and He knows He can at any time summon them to His help, if He will, against His enemies. He says that in the world to come, marriage has no longer its earthly function, but men are as the angels. Most beautiful of all is His reference to the guardian angels of little children. In rabbinical teaching, there are only five great angels 'of the Presence,' who always have the royal *entrée*, and are privileged to behold the undimmed glory of God. Jesus says that the angels of each child have this honour. Whether He meant by 'children' simple-hearted believers only, or, as is probable, included little children with them, in any case He said that they all have their representative at the Throne of Grace, in the holiest of all ; and could at any time avail themselves of their right. This was as great a saying as that by which He 'made all meats clean.' It removed at one stroke all the grades of intermediaries and barriers to the divine Presence that Judaism had built up with such unhappy ingenuity, fencing off God from direct communion with the least of His children.

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[1] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, p. 159.

[2] Op. cit., p. 524.

It is the privilege of some, whose spiritual senses are keen, to have communion with these heavenly guides ; and their ministry may have many modes of activity, even though its source may not be recognized. For the Maid, her conversations with her saints were not less actual experiences than with La Hire or Dunois ; and no one can question the efficacy of the guidance. For Sundar Singh, his converse with angels is not in a realm of dream, but of higher reality than that of ordinary sense-experience. Such things are set down as unreal, in mere dogmatic assertion, by those who have so attuned themselves to the purely mechanical elements of the material world that for them these constitute the highest, if not the only, reality.

There are many who believe they are constantly guided by the care and help of human friends who have passed beyond the veil. If they are the victims of delusion, one can only say, ''tis folly to be wise' ; for they are truly guided. They themselves are not concerned about scepticism or denials ; for they know.

It is difficult to touch upon this subject in a brief note, since in this province both the will-to-believe and the will-to-disbelieve get completely out of hand. The orthodox scientist regards the subject as anathema. He is like a captain sailing over an unknown sea, where strange magnetic currents throw his compass out of gear. What here is thoroughly unscientific is to deny the facts outright, and still more so to question the integrity of those who study them : this last is a council of despair. On the other hand, there are many who are so morbidly anxious for some communication from Beyond that they accept evidence of the flimsiest character, and must often deceive themselves.

In this connexion, it is a pleasure to be able to refer to the very careful and complete note on Spiritism in Ballard's *Christian Findings After Fifty Years*. He regards the fact that there is guidance from the other side as proved, at the same time pointing out the utter inadequacy of much Spiritism, religiously. His position, both positively and negatively, I believe to be the right one ; and there is no need to enlarge upon it. All Christian people believe their deceased friends are alive still, with a fuller life and higher powers ; and also that the veil that separates is very slight. There is nothing to forbid the possibility that one of the ways of Providence is through the ministry of the saints above to those on earth. What could be a more heavenly joy than for a mother, snatched by death from her little child, to continue her service from that higher realm ? We are compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses, as we run the heavenly race : they are in deep sympathy with us ; and, surely, are not merely inactive spectators.

I would add this, that what influences me more than anything else, in the valuation of evidence in this relation, is the testimony of so many to a happy fellowship with their friends beyond, altogether apart from mediums and what one may call the ordinary apparatus of psychical research. These very real and sacred experiences do not get into controversial literature at all. To those who have them they would be desecrated by the touch of unbelief. The witness is given, often enough ; but there is no attempt to force that witness on those determined not to receive it on any terms. There must be a sympathetic understanding of the whole spiritual situation : otherwise 'they will not believe, though one rise from the dead.'

Ballard quotes John Wesley. He says, 'John Wesley's common sense led him, in his day, to acknowledge this. Said he, " If but one account of the intercourse of men with departed spirits be admitted, the whole castle in the air of deism, atheism, materialism falls to the ground. I know no reason, therefore, why we Christians should suffer even this weapon to be wrested out of our hands." '[1]

A word may be said about the triviality of much that is supposed to come through from Beyond. As to this, when matters of personal identity are in question, it is the particular collocations of trivial details that are all-important, as is abundantly illustrated in detective stories. Again, often a general principle or law is only reached by wading through countless trivial details and experiments. One of the maxims of science is that no detail is really trivial. In fact, many recent advances in science have been due to nothing else than the resolute interrogation of trivial residues and variations. Nothing could be more 'trivial,' in a sense, than the slight mutations that occur in the American fruit-fly ; but laboratories are devoted to their research, millions of individuals are reared and studied, and a whole literature has sprung up about them. If trivialities were discredited in science, many learned professors would find themselves *minus* their occupation and their salaries.

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[1] Ballard, *Christian Findings After Fifty Years*, p. 167.

On the other hand, it may be said that many of the experiences reported are far from being trivial : they are morally and spiritually helpful and illuminating : in the mass of purported ' communications ' by no means all is to be despised. One example may be appended, which whoever likes may call trivial :

What need to sorrow since our hope is certain ?
What need to languish though the night seem long ?
Stars are ablaze beyond Earth's misty curtain,
Sorrow and silence shall have end in song.

Of the angels :

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want !
How oft do they with golden pineons cleave
The flitting skyes, like flying Pursuivant,
Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant !
They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward,
And their bright Squadrons round about us plant ;
And all for love, and nothing for reward.
O ! why should hevenly God to men have such regard ?

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